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Developing Programs that Attract Students

have you ever noticed how some coffee shops always seem busy while others are always empty? On the surface, both businesses may appear quite similar – they serve the same products at relatively the same price in the same communities. One thrives, the other doesn't. Why?

There are many reasons, but it all comes down to providing the customer base what they want, when they want it, how they want it, where they want it and at a price they will accept. This same formula can be applied to the success of agricultural education programs.

Identify Student Interests

When we compare a program that is thriving to one that is failing, the differences are often subtle, but easily identifiable. Think about your program in relation to the above formula. When was the last time you surveyed the students in your school and asked them about their interests? Taking this simple step has made a big difference to many programs.

Leah Addington of Albert Lea, Minn., asked her students for their input and, acting on their input, added a small animals course. "I was blown away with the response," Addington says. "The first year, I had five sections of 32 students each. The demand clearly exceeded the supply." (Learn more about this program on page 5.)

Supplying Value that Exceeds Price

When it comes to the "price" factor, the students' currency is time in the daily class schedule. What "price" do they have to pay to take your program? What courses are competing for the students' time, and what rewards do these competitors offer? Are there things you can do to increase the value students receive for the time they invest, such as earning science or math credits?

As schools across the country ratchet up graduation requirements and post-secondary institutions increase admission requirements, agricultural education programs must meet these needs or be "priced" out of the market. One way to add value is through the leadership opportunities offered by the student organization, FFA.

Agriculture teachers can offer students programs and incentives for competition and scholarships that no other program in the school can match. Use these programs to your students' advantage. Encourage your members to participate in the agriscience fair, the degree program, career development events—whatever excites their interests and meets their needs.

In this issue, you'll find stories of teachers who have excelled in growing their programs along with a new challenge coming from the profession's leadership to grow the **number** of programs. This issue also includes news from the 78th National FFA Convention, including updated information on the *Seeds of Hope* campaign and hurricane relief and rebuilding efforts.



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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.

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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

Adapting Curriculum to Meet Student Needs

i have heard of agricultural education programs being closed due to declining enrollment, sometimes caused by shrinking rural communities. However, I have a unique situation on the other end of the spectrum.

My high school is located in Lincoln County, S.D., one of the fastest-growing counties in the country. Fifteen years ago, our grade 9–12 enrollment was 140 students, five years ago it was 200, and this year we are at 300. Granted, this still does not make us a huge school district, but the demographics of my students have changed drastically.

When I began teaching at Harrisburg, there were fewer than 20 students in the agricultural education program, and approximately 40 percent of them lived on farms or were placed in production agricultural SAEs. Now, I see 114 different students everyday with less than two percent of them living on farms and the majority of them having little to no background in production agriculture. It did not take me long to realize that to keep this program alive, serious changes to the curriculum must be made.

Keeping traditional, production-oriented students interested, while at the same time, attracting non-traditional students creates interesting challenges when designing curriculum. I looked at the SAE and career opportunities available to my students, then modified or created new courses to better prepare them for these careers. Visits and meetings with golf course managers, landscapers, veterinarians, pet store owners, retail sales managers and food service personnel have led to incorporating course content designed to meet the needs of these industries.



By Todd Marks
Agriculture Instructor,
Harrisburg High School,
Harrisburg, South Dakota

With the exception of a traditional, one-semester production animal science course, all of my courses now reflect the input of urban agricultural professionals. Courses in horticulture, landscaping and turf grass management have replaced plant science and crop production. Small animal care is my most popular course, as we not only explore the basics, but we also build doghouses, present pet care demonstrations to elementary students and visit the local humane society.

I have recently added an agriculture leadership course that is offered to juniors and seniors. This course uses the LifeKnowledge materials. In addition, we focus on developing the students' public speaking and parliamentary procedure skills. The agriculture leadership course also includes activities designed to help the students develop and make group presentations and develop the skills needed to plan, organize and implement community projects.

Many will say that modifying curriculum is nothing new and that the changes I have made to my program are not unique. While this is likely true, I do know the changes have worked here and my enrollment and FFA membership continue to grow each year. A strong public relations program has helped to inform our non-agriculture parents and students that the agricultural education program and FFA definitely offer many benefits to them. Without these curriculum changes, I would venture to guess that my program would be a fraction of what it is today.

Rigor and Relevance Attract Students

the agricultural education program at Lebanon High School in Indiana is only in its second year. However, in that short period of time the program has become a powerhouse, attracting 416 students in grades 8–12 and growing to a three-teacher department.

How did they do it? According to the lead teacher, Byron Ernest, it started with a focus on setting the bar high and without preconceived notions of what an agriculture program should be.

“When we created this program, we were somewhat non-traditional in our approach,” Ernest says. “The year prior to opening the program, I was teaching at a neighboring program and the superintendent asked me to present an information program at the middle school and at the high school for students and parents. My students and I created an hour-long PowerPoint presentation that outlined agricultural education and all the opportunities it provides students. My creed speaker presented the creed and other students participated in the presentation.”

In December, Ernest was invited back to meet with the students who were interested in the proposed agriculture program and their parents. “Working with the super-

intendent and the principal, we conducted detailed surveys with the students to determine their interests and what courses should be offered. As we developed the courses, we kept an eye on rigor and relevance, with a goal of attracting the top academic students in the school.”

Here are the full-year courses they decided to offer:

- Fundamentals of Agricultural Science and Business is the introductory course and is available to students in grades 8-12; counts for high school credit
- Advanced Life Sciences – Animals (offered as an academic honors course, top-tier eligibility)
- Advanced Life Sciences – Plants and soils (offered as an academic honors course, top-tier eligibility)
- Horticulture Science
- Agricultural Mechanization I
- Agricultural Mechanization II
- Agribusiness Management
- Equine Science

The goal of attracting top-tier students has been realized. Last year, 31 students who had taken one of the advanced life science courses decided to test their knowledge base. All 31 passed the test and received college-level credits. This year, the students who are ranked first, second, third and sixth academically in the senior class are enrolled in agriculture courses.

Setting the Bar High

Ernest credits this achievement to the fact that the program is student driven and has a laser focus on the classroom. “We listen to our customers – the students – and they respond,”



Lebanon, Ind., students at the agronomy lab.

Ernest says. “Our students know these are good, solid classes and they promote the program to their peers. We emphasize what happens in the classroom as the foundation of our program. My philosophy is that if we do well in the classroom, everything else will come along.”

Another part of Ernest’s philosophy that contributes to the program’s success is his student-centric perspective. “When I’m asked what I teach, my answer is that I teach students. I view agriculture as the path to success, but I **teach** students. I believe that distinction is one of the things that brings students into our program who otherwise wouldn’t have considered an agriculture course.”

The physical plant in which the program is housed is another contributing factor to success. The classroom is basically a science lab with 12 stations. The agriculture department also shares a greenhouse with the science department. Lastly, the school has a 15-acre farm—known as the outdoor agronomy lab—that Ernest and his teaching colleagues, Stacey Hartley and Ambra Tennery, use for hands-on learning.

Ernest encourages agriculture teachers to look at academic rigor as a critical element to success rather than a barrier. “Students will raise their level of performance to meet your expectations. They will not only rise to the challenge, they will seek it out. Don’t be afraid of pushing yourself and your students to excel!”



Ernest works with two students in the agriculture classroom.

Meeting Students' Interests

the Albert Lea FFA Chapter in Minnesota has a history of success. However, when Leah Addington joined the faculty a couple of years ago, she recognized that the program needed to diversify if it were going to thrive.

"Like many places across our country," Addington says, "our area is experiencing growth, and we have a shrinking number of students who come from farming backgrounds. We needed to attract more non-farm students to keep our program viable."

Determine Student Interests

Addington surveyed the school's students, providing a list of alternative courses and asking what courses they might find of interest. "The survey included questions like, 'Do you have a pet?' Almost everyone surveyed answered 'yes,' and there was significant interest in a small animal course."

She went to work building a case to add a small animal class. "At our school, adding a course to the schedule is a rigorous process," Addington says. "There is a committee that considers each request

and determines whether or not to pursue the question. I asked that group how many had pets. Most did, so I proceeded to discuss the importance of knowing how to provide proper care and received a very positive response."

Addington also pitched the idea of adding a leadership course and received approval for that course, too. "I knew we had students who could benefit from our program who weren't enrolling because they didn't see the opportunities," Addington says. "I wanted to be able to attract the students who are athletes and those who are interested in student council and other leadership opportunities."

Attracting More Diverse Students

A flood of student interest rewarded Addington's efforts. The first year the quarter-long small animal course was offered, so many students enrolled that they ended up offering five sections, filled with 32 students each. The leadership course also attracted a fresh group of students who would have otherwise not likely enrolled in an agriculture course.

"I used the LifeKnowledge materials as the base of my curriculum," she says. "The timing was perfect, and the differential instruction style was a perfect fit for these students. I incorporated a lot of activities into this course, like rock climbing and farm visits. I used the opportunity to help these new students learn about FFA and understand it was for more than just the farm kids".

Be a Team Player

While she experienced success by adding courses driven by student demand, Addington emphasizes the need to collaborate with other teachers. If the student interest is there, consider offering a food science course in conjunction with the family and consumer sciences teacher.

“
We must always remember that we are **part of a team** preparing students for everything from **standardized tests** to the **world beyond school**. Reach out to other departments and **find ways to collaborate**.
”

Meet with the math department and share your farm business management curriculum. Invite them to team-teach a lesson or two. The possibilities are endless."

Lastly, Addington stresses the need for teachers to be adaptable and creative. "I'm not sure where the Albert Lea program would be if we hadn't added those new courses. I do know that students are always looking for something new and fun, and our courses need to be competitive. We need to show our potential students all the benefits our courses offer in terms they understand."

Albert Lea Area by the Numbers

- Albert Lea Area High School serves a town of ~18,000
- 1,100 students in grades 9-12
- ~340 students enrolled in agriculture courses
- ~100 FFA members
- predominantly rural area
- 10-15 percent of the student body lives on working farms; balance in rural non-farm and suburban situations

Editor's Note: Leah Addington recently accepted a new position as a leadership development coordinator with the Minnesota FFA Association. She is working with the state officer team while pursuing a master's degree in agricultural education.



Students in Addington's agriculture leadership class provide an agricultural literacy program to elementary students.

Set Your Expectations High

When you teach agriculture in an urban setting, one of your first hurdles is overcoming stereotypes and helping students and faculty understand what your program is all about. Nick Brown, who is in his fourth year of teaching agriculture at Jenks High School in suburban Tulsa, Okla., says he spent much of his first year working on that objective.

Overcoming Misperceptions

"That first year, my students and I produced a video to use with middle school students and their parents," Brown explains. "We included a veterinarian performing surgery on a dog, students working in a greenhouse and in the shop welding. I sent my students to the middle school to talk to those students about the agriculture program and learned that peer-to-peer recruiting is by far the most effective approach."

Once the program's image was under control, Brown focused on updating the program's course offering to more closely reflect student interests and needs. "It is hard to convince a student or a parent that a young person needs horticulture skills to be successful," Brown says. "However, when it comes to communication and leadership skills, it's a different story."

Course Offerings

Brown launched an agricultural communications course with a focus on leadership. He uses the *Leadership, Personal Development, Career Success* textbook from

Delmar as a base, covering parliamentary procedure, speaking skills, developing a résumé and job interview skills. The course also covers how to write a news release, how to target news organizations for coverage, how to create a commercial message and the leadership CDEs.

"This is by far the most productive class for the FFA chapter," Brown says. "All of the chapter officers are enrolled in this course, and they use chapter activities as a base for their class projects. For example, they'll spend much of December working on FFA Week activities. They learn to use video editing software and apply those skills to produce video segments for our chapter banquet and for recruitment events."

Brown continues, "Kids like to develop skills that set them apart from their peers. Being able to offer video production skills, for example, is a great recruitment tool because the students know that it's a skill most of the school population doesn't have."

The bottom line for Brown is getting students engaged. "I make my expectations known early on by asking each student individually to try things, promising if they don't enjoy it, I'll stop bugging them," he says. "Once you get a student to participate in an FFA activity, you're almost guaranteed that they'll enjoy it and want to do more."

That pattern of creating expectations continues in every conceivable arena. "I expect my students to pay their dues and be FFA members," Brown says. "I expect them to buy a jacket and participate in activities. When registration time rolls around, I don't ask them IF they are going to take an agriculture class next year, I ask them WHICH course they will take. The students become conditioned to the high expectations and work hard to meet them."



Jenks FFA chapter officers made an appearance on local television station KOTV to promote National FFA Week.

Recruitment Tips

- Ask current students to submit a list of students they would recommend enroll in an agriculture course, then create and deliver flyers to these students encouraging them to consider agriculture courses.
- Encourage students to create a recruitment skit; Brown's students used a Napoleon Dynamite theme with the chapter reporter playing the role of Napoleon and another student playing Pedro.
- Encourage the officer team to reach out to all members; Brown's officers split the membership list into six groups. Each officer reaches out to the members on his or her list and encourages them to participate in meetings and other activities. The officers have made participation into a contest amongst themselves.
- Publish a monthly newsletter and send it to every parent. The Jenks chapter newsletter, *The Rising Sun*, includes member accomplishments and upcoming activities.

Jenks High School by the Numbers

- ~2,600 students in grades 10-12
- Located in a southwest suburb of Tulsa
- 220 students enrolled in agriculture courses (up from 68 four years ago)
- 100% FFA membership
- Urban student base; only 6 FFA members have a rural background

Diversity and Agricultural Education

Skittles – the original, bite-sized, fruit-flavored candy that gives you the freedom to “taste the rainbow.” When people think about Skittles, they likely envision an assortment of colors with just the right, sweet taste. However, when people hear the word diversity, words skid on thin ice, with the hopes of not falling into the bitter cold waters of controversy. Too often, diversity is viewed as a thorn in the side, as a potential source of distress rather than a source of strength.

What most people don't realize is that diversity is an opportunity for growth and innovation. Embracing diversity does not mean annihilating tradition. On the contrary, it is about recognizing and valuing our differences while enhancing tradition.

Diversity is not just one specific aspect; it includes areas such as gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, lifestyle, and even our personality. When we review areas of diversity in the FFA, we see that advancements have been made. Standing before you today as an African-American FFA member tells you that in 1965 someone was thinking about diversity. Having the opportunity to be able to stand in front of you as a female shows you that at the 42nd National Convention, delegates were thinking about diversity. For my friend who is legally blind to be an active member, hold a chapter office, and participate in career development events signifies that something is being done about diversity.

Editor's Note: The following article is part of a prepared public speech given by Loy Webb when she was a senior at the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences. Webb is a freshman at the University of Illinois majoring in communications.

As I stand before you as an African-American, female, urban agriculture student and FFA member, it is evident that we have taken steps to achieving diversity; however, we still have a long road to travel.

First, we must understand how important diversity is to the future growth of our organization. Between 1990 and 2050, the Caucasian population of the United States will grow by 25 percent, while all other ethnic groups will increase by 68 percent to 187 percent (U.S. Census, 1990).

As the demographics of the U.S. continue to change, our membership should grow to reflect that change. In 2004, the National FFA Organization's membership consisted of 77 percent Caucasian students, 17 percent Hispanic students and 4 percent African-American students. We have lots of room to grow.

Many National FFA Foundation sponsors recognize how important diversity is to growth. Diversity takes a front seat at PepsiCo because they realize that the ethnically diverse consumer represents their single largest business opportunity. They believe that without minority sales dollars, PepsiCo will not grow. We need to think along the same lines in order for our organization to continue to grow.

Diversity can be the anchor that holds us together collectively as an organization, or it can be the driving force that creates rifts between us. No matter our



Loy Webb

backgrounds, we are all striving to achieve the common goal of developing student success.

Prior to becoming a student at the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences, I thought agriculture was only farming. However, I discovered the diversity within the agricultural industry. We must take great care to portray FFA and agricultural education in its best light. Think back to that bag of Skittles. They appeal to all races, genders, ages and backgrounds. With more than 300 career opportunities in agriculture, if we want to appeal to non-traditional students, we must develop and convey an image that includes something that appeals to everyone.

Improvement is a matter of the questions we choose to ask and the answers we courageously find. The answers can be found through the facts. The truth is FFA has had 77 years of leadership. The truth is FFA has changed my life and possibly yours as well. The truth is we have not fully tasted the rainbow. Today we can choose to open the door of change. I have the key; it is diversity.

“With more than 300 career opportunities in agriculture, if we want to appeal to non-traditional students, we must develop and convey an image that includes something that appeals to everyone.”

10,000 Quality Programs By 2015

in the business book, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*, authors Jim Collins and Jerry Porras identified “Big, Hairy Audacious Goals” as a key method successful organizations employ to stimulate progress while preserving their core values. A BHAG (pronounced bee-hag for short), is a huge and daunting challenge. Like the 1960s goal of a NASA moon mission, a BHAG captures the imagination and inspires people toward significant achievement.

Recent discussions within the national agricultural education profession’s leadership have led to the formation of a BHAG for the profession. Specifically, at its July meeting, the National FFA Board of Directors proposed a long-term strategic goal of 10,000 quality agricultural education programs by 2015.

Larry Case, Ed. D., National FFA advisor, CEO and coordinator of agricultural and rural education at the U.S. Department of Education, explains that the goal emerged out of discussions concerning what needs to be done to move the profession from basically maintaining its current size to growing to meet the industry’s needs.

“We have faced a shortage of well-trained agriculture teachers for years,” Case says. “Now, we’re also facing shortages in leadership from the teacher level through teacher education. We need to take a new look at an old problem. To solve it, we’re going to need the best minds from all segments of the profession to work together and create new approaches.”

Speaking to the National Association of State Supervisors’ annual meeting in October, Doug Loudenslager, chief operat-

At its October meeting, the National Council for Agricultural Education Board of Directors adopted the following:

“Because every student deserves an opportunity to pursue a high-quality education combining personal, academic and career development;

Because one out of every five Americans will be employed in the critical food, fiber and natural resources industries of agriculture;

Because the United States depends on citizens being equipped with the education and life skills necessary to ensure the social, civic and economic well-being of local communities. . .

The National Council for Agricultural Education proposes that by 2015 there be in operation 10,000 quality agricultural science education programs serving students through an integrated model of classroom/laboratory instruction, experiential learning, and leadership and personal skill development. Further, all students will be members of the FFA and have a supervised agricultural experience that supports classroom and laboratory instruction.”



Case and Loudenslager during the October National FFA Board of Directors meeting.

ing officer of the National FFA Organization, reviewed the objective and emphasized the need for working collaboratively.

“We are all in this together,” Loudenslager said. “This is an incredible opportunity for Team Ag Ed, but we must find new ways of working together if we are going to make progress.”

Loudenslager emphasized the importance of having a long-range, unifying goal that will position agricultural education for the future. He touched on No Child Left Behind, indicating that teachers must operate effectively in a world of increasing expectations where academic rigor and subject relevance are measured and evaluated.

Loudenslager noted several elements being pursued that will play roles in meeting the 10,000 by 2015 objective, including a new content standards project, strategic planning efforts, an agricultural education awareness campaign and the agricultural education opportunities fund.

“We have a chance to endow the teaching of agriculture for years to come,” Loudenslager concluded. “Our global competitiveness is a function of the quality of our educational systems. The world is looking to us to ensure food security and food independence.”

“
Our role, once again, will require **confidence** and **conviction**.
It will require **boldness** and **risk taking**. It will require **making** and **acting on decisions** that may not fit today at the beginning, but we—
and the society we serve—
will grow into them.
Dr. Lou Anna Kimsey-Simon, President
Michigan State University

”

Recruiting and Retaining Agriculture Teachers

the first step in meeting the profession's goal of having 10,000 quality agricultural education programs by 2015 is dramatically increasing the number of highly qualified teachers. Teachers hold the key to making that happen.

The National FFA Organization has been collecting information on its membership roster for a number of years as a way of identifying students who have an interest in or aptitude for teaching. "What we've been asking teachers to do is identify students in their classrooms who they feel would make good teachers," says Larry Gossen, Local Program Success specialist for the National FFA Organization. "I can't overemphasize how important this tool is. The roster is the only way we currently have of collecting this type of data."

One reason teachers give for not identifying students is that they don't know how the information will be used. Gossen says that once collected, the data is processed by state and the state staff and teacher training institutions across the country are provided with the names and addresses of the identified students who are in their service areas. For example, the list of students who are identified by teachers in Indiana will be sent to the head of the Agriscience Ambassador Program.



One key to retaining teachers in the profession is professional development. Teachers across the country are receiving in-service training through the Agriscience Ambassador Program.

teacher education program at Purdue University and the state supervisor of agricultural education in Indiana. It is then up to the teacher training institutions to communicate with those prospective students and open the doors for them to enroll in a teacher education program.

New Tools Available

Beyond the roster, Gossen says the National FFA Organization is working on a new Agriculture Educator Workroom as part of its website. "Our goal is to make it easier for teachers to navigate through the information that is available. One section of the new site will discuss the teacher shortage and the importance of submitting the names of students."

Beyond the roster, the LPS staff has begun collecting the names of prospective teachers as they work with teachers at the state level. Again, they will sort the students by state and provide to state staff and teacher training institutions. If you have any students in your classroom now whom you'd like to nominate as a prospective teacher, please notify an LPS specialist by sending an e-mail message to lgossen@ffa.org.

Gossen reiterates, "Finding and recruiting the right students to become teachers is critical to our profession and a high priority within the National FFA Organization. As teachers, we need to groom young people not only to take the place of our colleagues who are retiring, but also to fill new positions and develop new programs as agricultural education expands."



Professional Development

Another step in reaching the 10,000 quality programs by 2015 goal is providing professional development for those in the profession now. The Local Program Success staff is working with the National Association of Agricultural Educators as well as teacher educators, to provide in-service training and resources.

"Our goal is to ensure that every teacher has the resources they need to improve instruction and make their jobs easier," Gossen says.

“If you have any students in your classroom now whom you'd like to nominate as a prospective teacher, please send an e-mail message to lgossen@ffa.org.”

Another component of that effort is the Agriscience Ambassador Program. The goal is to have at least one teacher in each state trained as an agriscience ambassador so that they, in turn, can share that training with the teachers in their state. To date, 22 teachers from 20 states have received in-depth training through the Agriscience Ambassador Program, which is sponsored by DuPont as a special project of the National FFA Foundation. In addition to the workshops these teachers are conducting in their home states, they are also leading workshops at the national FFA convention and the NAAE convention. If you'd like to learn more about the ambassador program or increase your agriscience teaching skills, make it a point to attend one of these workshops.

Living to Serve: A Look Back at the 2005 National FFA Convention

following the final gavel tap that marked the conclusion of the 78th National FFA Convention, 52,396 FFA members, advisors and guests departed Louisville and began their journeys home with hopes of another year of leadership and ideas for “living to serve” in their communities across the country.

Seeds of Hope

Convention attendees had an opportunity to help the Gulf Coast FFA chapters affected by the hurricanes through the “Seeds of Hope” campaign. FFA chapters, businesses and individuals from across the country flocked to the “Seeds of Hope” booth located in the shopping mall to make donations, buy a wristband or a t-shirt to help the cause.

During the 10th and final convention session, National FFA Central Region Vice President Justine Sterling led the celebration and announced the total amount collected for “Seeds of Hope.” Through the generous support of members, advisors, state associations and FFA partners, National FFA President Jackie Mundt presented a check to the state presidents from Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida in the amount of \$528,024.45! For additional information on the hurricane damage and the Seeds of Hope campaign, see the story on page 15 and visit the official website at www.ffagive.org.

Historical Milestones

The convention also featured special programming to mark historical milestones. Members celebrated the 75th anniversary of the FFA Creed, the 40th anniversary of the FFA National Agricultural Career Show, and the 40th



Major General Arnold Fields

anniversary of the New Farmers of America/Future Farmers of America merger.

Major General (ret.) Arnold Fields, who served as the 1963–64 national NFA secretary, shared his thoughts regarding his NFA experience, the merger and what has transpired during the ensuing 40 years.

“Over the course of my career, I have taken into consideration and applied the leadership principles that I learned as a New Farmer of America,” Fields said. “It was as a result of those experiences that I feel I was privileged to be catapulted into the senior leadership of our military establishment, and now the senior leadership of our state department and diplomatic community. I have stood on the shoulders of giants along the way. I must acknowledge the leadership and guidance that my agriculture teacher, Mr. Norman F. Brown, provided. He was my leader; he was my mentor; and he made the way plain for me to further my studies and achievements.”

Fields’ remarks also included references to his most recent leadership experience with the U.S. Department of State. Following his retirement from active duty in the Marine Corps in 2004, Fields accepted the position of Iraqi Office of Reconstruction chief of staff, and spent 14 months in Baghdad, returning to the United States Oct. 20. To listen to General Fields remarks, as well as other

highlights from the convention, go to www.ffa.org/convention/convention_highlights_audio.html.

Stars Over America

The 2005 **American Star in Agriculture Placement** is Jason Frerichs from Wilmot, S.D. Frerichs has played a significant role in the day-to-day operations of his family farm. He started his supervised agricultural experience in 1997 when he began working on the family farm. At that time, his primary duties were to feed the livestock, drive the tractor and work the cattle. The 1,200-acre farm consists of corn, soybeans, wheat and pasture, as well as 50 head of registered Duroc and Yorkshire pigs.

Frerichs also has a seasonal position at Wilmot Farmers Co-op. He began this job after his freshman year of high school, working in the office and assisting customers. He advanced quickly and soon acquired a Commercial Drivers License and a Commercial Applicators License to further his opportunities. Frerichs now works as an agronomy services specialist.

Frerichs is pursuing a degree in agricultural education with minors in animal science and speech at South Dakota State University. Upon graduation, he hopes to attend law school and then enter the public service sector.



Jason Frerichs, American Star in Agriculture Placement

Scott Hill of Miller, Mo., is the 2005 **American Star Farmer**. Hill always knew he wanted to be a farmer. He started with a couple of steers, one horse and 80 acres.

Scott Hill, American Star Farmer



As he began his supervised agricultural experience, he started acquiring more steers from his grandfather in exchange for labor. "Over a period of years, I began to reap the benefits of my labor," the 21-year-old FFA member says. "I was living the dream, but I was having cash flow problems."

In 2001, Hill began working at Rathman Performance Horses. There, he learned valuable management, training and marketing skills that he was able to apply to his own enterprises.

Hill was named the 2002 National FFA Equine Science Placement Proficiency Winner. Currently, he raises and trains 40 horses, has 140 cow/calf pairs and owns 414 acres. He also leases an additional 300 acres for hay and owns 100 head of roping cattle, which he leases out. He hopes to expand to 300 head of cattle and market 20 horses a year.

Sara Morrissey of Lincoln, Neb., didn't know what to expect when she walked into her first agriculture class as a freshman. "I was from the city and was not involved with production agriculture," says the 21-year-old Norris FFA member. "I discovered that agriculture is much more than plants and animals." Since then she has received many awards for her interests in agriculture.

Morrissey was named the 2005 **American Star in Agriscience**. She began working in the Food Microbiology laboratory of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Food Science and Technology Department. While working in the lab, she assisted graduate students with their research, as well as conducted her own.

The first project she completed was titled "Safety of Ground Beef Thawed at Room Temperature." She entered it into the National FFA Agriscience Fair and placed second. The following summer, she completed another project, "Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria in Poultry." This time she took it to the National Agriscience Fair and

placed first. In 2003, Morrissey won the National Food Science Proficiency Award.

Morrissey is majoring in food science and technology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She is a student employee in both the Food Microbiology Laboratory and the Food Processing Center Microbiology Laboratory. "The fact that I've grown with my SAE and haven't stayed in one place has been great," she says. "I've taken on a lot of new responsibilities and have been challenged."



Brett Nunnenkamp, American Star in Agribusiness

Brett Nunnenkamp of Sutton, Neb., is the 2005 **American Star in Agribusiness**. Nunnenkamp began his agribusiness endeavor eight years ago when he, alongside his grandfather, planted two acres of pumpkins and set up a roadside stand. Growing up on a farm, Nunnenkamp had developed an interest in landscaping, gardening and production agriculture. A pumpkin patch seemed like a perfect supervised agricultural experience. It was met with great reviews from customers. "The next year I decided to plant a pumpkin patch on my own and offer a larger variety," says the 21-year-old Sutton FFA member.

Now, his operation has expanded to 9.5 acres, growing several different varieties and selling to eight wholesalers in the area. In addition to pumpkins, Nunnenkamp sells crafts, painted pumpkins, candles and jams at a well-rounded, one-stop country store.

A senior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Nunnenkamp is a horticulture major. His studies have better prepared him to accomplish the necessary goals for his business. "During the past three years, I have broadened my knowledge of plant and soil sciences, fruit and vegetable production, greenhouse management and plant identification," comments Nunnenkamp. "I have learned the different aspects of purchasing, adver-

tising and selling the product, which will be a great asset to my business."

The four stars were each recognized on the main stage during a ceremony at the 78th National FFA Convention, Thursday, Oct. 27. They each received a plaque and a cash award of \$2,000. The three runners-up in each category received \$1,000 cash awards.

Individual contributors to the National FFA Foundation provide funding for the Stars Over America Program. DuPont and the USDA Farm Service Agency provide funding for the "Stars Over America," audiovisual presentation featuring the finalists as a special project of the National FFA Foundation. BASE, Case IH, Farm Credit System, and Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc. co-sponsor the American FFA Degree recognition program.



Carl Aakre, Agriscience Teacher of the Year

Agriscience Teacher of the Year

Carl Aakre of Stacy, Minn., is the 2005 Agriscience Teacher of the Year. Aakre was the agricultural science instructor and FFA advisor for the Agricultural and Food Sciences Academy (AFSA) FFA Chapter in Little Canada, Minn.

The Agricultural and Food Sciences Academy is a non-traditional program that uses a project-based learning format. Students are provided the opportunity to work independently and develop in-depth agriscience projects.

"Students in my agriscience courses use real-world issues such as biotechnology, precision agriculture and food sciences to comprehend scientific concepts," says Aakre. "By discussing the environmental, social and economic impacts they read about in the newspaper, they become more aware of the relationships between agriculture, science and their future."

The AFSA FFA Chapter began in 2001 and has already received national recognition. More than 30 of Aakre's students have qualified for the National Agriscience Fair and, in 2004, an AFSA student was named the Minnesota State Agriscience Star. The AFSA FFA Chapter was also named the 2005 Community Development Models of Innovation winner (see below).

In recognition of his achievement, Aakre received a personalized plaque, a plaque for his school and a \$1,500 cash award. PotashCorp sponsors the Agriscience Teacher of the Year Program as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

Foertsch found that corn uses a certain type of photosynthesis, which is insufficient in certain environments. He found if he could convert the photosynthesis type, he would be able to greatly increase the crop's production. Although his results were inconclusive, he feels that his study is a major break-through in changing photosynthesis.

Foertsch is a freshman at North Dakota State University pursuing a degree in biotechnology. He plans to work in research, aspiring to advance the future of agriculture.

Monsanto sponsors the Agriscience Student Scholarship and Recognition Program as a special project of the National FFA Foundation. Eligible FFA members are selected on the basis of research projects involving agriscience skills, using applications and new technologies in their high school agriculture classes. Students apply these lessons to their supervised agriculture experience (SAE). They are also evaluated on their academic achievement, as well as their involvement in school and community activities.

The recipients of the 2005 Non-Member H.O. Sargent Diversity Award were Mickey Ferris of Snyder, Texas; Dr. Billye Foster of Tucson, Ariz.; and Albert Reid of Petersburg, Va. These three individuals have all supported and enhanced agricultural education and FFA in unique ways.

Ferris, a housewife and mother, donates time and animals to her local FFA chapter, ensuring that every member has an opportunity to participate, regardless of financial limitations. Foster, an associate professor of agricultural education at the University of Arizona, promotes diversity through the women in agriculture courses she teaches and through publishing a national newsletter, *Desert Roses*. Reid, an extension agent focusing in aquaculture, establishes aquaculture units in classrooms, teaching young people that there are opportunities in agriculture beyond farming.

The H.O. Sargent Diversity Award began in the New Farmers of America (NEA), the former organization for African-American agriculture students. In 1965, the NEA merged with the FFA. This award, renewed in 1995, continues as an annual recognition program. All applicants have been involved with agricultural education and have implemented programs to promote diversity. Monsanto sponsors the H.O. Sargent Diversity Award as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.



Deundray Evans, H.O. Sargent Diversity Award winner



Robert Foertsch, Agriscience Student of the Year

Agriscience Student of the Year

Robert Foertsch's study on modifying the photosynthesis of corn earned this Wyndmere, N.D., student the 2005 Agriscience Student of the Year award. Foertsch attended Wyndmere Public School and is a member of the Wyndmere FFA Chapter.

H.O. Sargent Diversity Awards

Deundray Evans, a member of the Ponchatoula FFA Chapter in Ponchatoula, La., earned the national H.O. Sargent Diversity Award. This award recognizes FFA members who develop and/or actively support ways to reach underrepresented individuals/groups who have not yet been able to enjoy the benefits of agricultural education and FFA activities. Each FFA member finalist received a plaque, in addition to national recognition during the convention.

When Evans joined FFA, he noticed there was a small percentage of minorities in his chapter. He wanted all students to have the opportunities the National FFA Organization offers, so he organized numerous activities to promote diversity. He established a basketball tournament among classes and worked hard to encourage all minorities to play.

National Chapter Models of Innovation

The nation's top 10 three-star gold chapters in the National Chapter Award program compete in each of the award's three divisions to be named Model of Innovation winners. As part of the application process for the honor, each chapter

submits five activities in each of the three divisions. Each of the three division winners was announced on stage and received a plaque.

Student Development

The **Columbus, Texas, FFA Chapter** was named the Student Development Model of Innovation winner. In the Columbus FFA Chapter, money is not an obstacle in participating in FFA activities. Thanks to their “FFA Credit Program,” members earn money to pay their dues, purchase jackets or fund their supervised agricultural experience programs. Through the program, students earn two dollars per hour worked staffing the alumni concession stand or working other alumni events.

Chapter Development

The Chicago Ag Sciences FFA Chapter of Illinois was named the Chapter Development Model of Innovation winner. The Chicago Ag Sciences FFA Chapter encourages active membership by holding a lock-in for all agriculture students. During the lock-in, students attend leadership workshops, learn about FFA opportunities and dispel common misconceptions about the FFA. During the chapter’s annual awards banquet, they had more than 400 members, supporters and parents in attendance, along with National FFA Advisor, Larry Case. During the banquet, members were highlighted for their achievements over the last year, and more than 19 years of past chapter officers were recognized.

Community Development

The Agriculture and Food Sciences Academy FFA Chapter of Minnesota was named the Community Development Model of Innovation winner. Most of the members of the Agriculture and Food Sciences Academy come from urban areas and have never been exposed to hands-on farm experience. Through “Farm Service Day,” members were given the opportunity to experience farm life while area farmers received six hours of free labor. All 160 FFA members participated in the event, giving almost a thousand hours of work to eight different farmers. The students received experience with many different aspects of production agricul-

ture, including working with livestock, building fences and picking vegetables.

Middle School

The Beverley Manor Middle School FFA Chapter of Virginia was named the National Middle School Chapter. Beverley Manor Middle School FFA, which has 111 members, conducted several activities to expand members’ agricultural knowledge and participation. Through its “FFA BUCKS” auction, the chapter created incentives for members to participate in activities by having a points reward system. The activity ended with an auction-style event where members could use their “FFA BUCKS” to purchase various items. The activity helped increase chapter participation in FFA activities by 20 percent. A special educational forum, “Many Hats of the Farmer,” was presented to almost 300 sixth-grade students. The students focused on increasing publicity and providing information to the local community.

Toyota and the Land ‘O Lakes Foundation sponsor the Models of Innovation awards as a special project of the National FFA Foundation. It is one of many ways FFA members accomplish their mission and succeed in making a difference in their communities and the lives of their fellow students.

Record Level of Financial Support

This year marks the largest single year in fundraising for the National FFA Foundation. The new record level of support for FFA and agricultural education programs will help develop and maintain programs that benefit more than 490,000 students across the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

2005 FFA Foundation Sponsors’ Board Chairman Dwight Armstrong announced that the foundation raised a total of \$10,575,785 in 2005 to support annual projects and programs for FFA and agricultural education—an all-time record. Armstrong, chief executive officer of North American Nutrition Companies Inc., says



Dwight Armstrong, 2005 Foundation Sponsors’ Board Chairman

the record contributions from sponsors help prepare students to become future agricultural leaders. “We have a vested interest in these young people,” Armstrong says. “Today’s FFA members are learning to be the employees, managers, suppliers and customers who will lead and succeed in tomorrow’s agricultural and food manufacturing industries.”

Since 1944 the National FFA Foundation, through the support of its generous corporate and individual donors, has raised more than \$150 million to develop curricula, fund programs and recognize FFA members with awards and scholarships.

Career Show

As hundreds of FFA members waited for the doors of the 40th National FFA Convention Career Show to open, the National FFA Band provided upbeat, festive music to mark the occasion.

On any given day during the convention, thousands of FFA members wander through the career show, scoping out career and educational opportunities, meeting new people, and learning more about the variety of agriculture careers available and how to prepare for these careers. Learning activities ranged from the Agricultural Fair at the DuPont exhibit to the welding demonstration at the Hobart Welding exhibit. In addition to knowledge-based interactivities, a number of exhibitors challenged FFA members’ athleticism. Members could test their strength by doing chin-ups in the



122 FFA members to attend Washington Leadership Conference.

National Officers

One of the most popular features at this year's convention was the national FFA officer team. Always crowd favorites, each officer's retiring address is available online as an mp3 audio file [www.ffa.org/convention/highlights/conv_hgl_news.html]. These addresses make great tools for students' personal development and also for those interested in improving their speaking skills.

Marine Corps exhibit or try their hand at lumberjacking skills at the Stihl exhibit.

FFA advisors also recognize the ways in which students benefit from the career show. Herbert Trulove, an FFA advisor from Red Bay, Ala., says, "The career show is a huge, positive asset to the convention because it makes students aware of career opportunities in agribusiness and other fields."

Alumni Auction

At first glance, the vast display of items up for bid at the National FFA Alumni Live Auction makes one feel like a kid in a candy shop. Open to all, the event attracts those interested in doing a little personal shopping while at the same time helping to support FFA.

A wide variety of donated items were up for bid this year, including a propane grill, laptop leather briefcases, welding helmets and decorative benches. With many of the items not going cheap, a silver-plated FFA leather laptop bag was sold for a remarkable \$500. This is the third consecutive year the Milton FFA Chapter of Michigan has conducted the auction.

"We have had three outstanding years," says Bob Johnson, Milton FFA advisor, "and we are expecting another great sale. I would like to thank our sponsors who donate wonderful items year after year. Without these sponsors, this auction would not be possible."

This year, both the silent and live auction raised more than \$96,000. The 2004 live auction raised \$49,443.75, enough for

New Officer Team



Front row L to R: President-Travis Jett, Laverne, Okla.; Secretary-Jessie Geib, DeSmet, S.D.; back row L to R: Southern Region Vice President-Erica Der, Plant City, Fla.; Eastern Region Vice President-Ryan Peterson, Niles, Mich.; Western Region Vice President-Stuart Joy, Artesia, N.M. and Central Region Vice President-Anita Estes, Stuart, Neb.

As always, the highlight of the final session was the passing of the gavel to this year's new officers.

For more information on the new officers, visit [www.ffa.org/convention/highlights/conv_natofficers.html].

Additional Awards and Information

The 78th National FFA Convention is now in the record books and marks the close of the event's seven-year run in Louisville, Ky. With record levels of donations and an enthusiastic crowd, the event closed with inspirations of the coming year and next year's convention in Indianapolis.

For additional information including photos, audio clips and complete lists of award winners and degree recipients, visit [www.ffa.org/convention/highlights/conv_hgl_index.html]. RFD-TV will also be rebroadcasting the convention sessions. Check the RFD-TV website [www.rfdtv.com] for scheduling details.



Online Registration a Success

Working with teachers in eight states, the National FFA Organization pilot tested its new On-line Convention Registration system. The system provides incentives for teachers to register early and within the housing block. It allows electronic registration using purchase orders and credit card orders for registration, and automatically validates chapter information.

"I registered all the members who were attending from our region and traveling on the regional bus," says Dennis Bjorklund, Chaska Minn., FFA Chapter advisor. "I had filled out the paper version beforehand, so I knew what I needed to order in terms of session tickets, concert tickets and other events when I went online. I'd estimate that it took me all of about 15 minutes to process everything for 114 registration, including nine American Degree candidates. I entered all the information, hit send, had a chance to review my order and confirm it. I received all the materials via mail about two weeks later. It worked quite smoothly."

The online system includes many advisor-friendly features, such as notification of sold-out events, the ability to create, display and print convention agendas, and links to details on parking, maps, tours, etc. Of the advisors who tested the system this year, 100 percent indicated they would use the system again over paper options and would recommend it to other advisors. The program will be rolled out and made available to all advisors nationwide for the 2006 convention.

Planting Seeds of Hope

it is amazing what can be accomplished when everyone focuses on the goal rather than who will receive the credit. This adage has never been truer than when viewed through the mirror of Team Ag Ed's response to the hurricanes that devastated the Gulf Coast.

You'll find many heartwarming stories about how the various members of Team Ag Ed have come together to help their Gulf Coast colleagues during their hour of need at the *Seeds of Hope* website, [www.ffagive.org]. One of the stories posted tells how the Ponchatoula FFA Chapter in Louisiana was able to gather, assemble and deliver more than 30,000 backpacks full of age- and gender-appropriate supplies to students who had been displaced by the storms. Others tell of inventive fundraising efforts from members across the country.

Financial Contributions

At the close of the national FFA convention, \$528,024.45 had been raised through the *Seeds of Hope* campaign for use in rebuilding the agricultural education programs affected by the hurricanes. This number includes \$100,000 from RFD-TV, \$10,000 from the Veteran's Corporation,

along with all the funds contributed by FFA members and chapters and the dollars raised through the sale of *Seeds of Hope* t-shirts and bracelets.

What isn't included in that impressive number are the countless contributions of time, talent, treasure and all sorts of "stuff" FFA members gathered and delivered to chapters that had been hit. FFA members across the country raised money, gathered supplies, made arrangements for shipping and were able to get the goods into the hands of people who needed them in a short amount of time.

Putting it in Perspective

Probably the greatest accomplishment of this project was not the volume of supplies sent south, nor the amount of money raised, but the leadership demonstrated and teamwork displayed.

Mike Womochil, who teaches agriculture in Abilene, Kan., comments, "To me, one of the best results, besides the obvious one of helping those in need, was to see our FFA members working side by side with members from other chapters and our agriculture teachers working so hard together to accomplish this goal. No one is going to receive an award, we didn't beat our arch rival, but hearing the comments back from everyone, I think we are more excited about this than we would be if we

won a state CDE or a national proficiency award. We need to take a serious look at what we were able to do by working together on a common goal instead of against each other in competition."

Planting seeds of hope, indeed.



Former FFA Member Leads Joint Task Force Katrina

Following the devastation wrought by hurricanes Katrina and Rita along the Gulf Coast, a real-life action figure emerged bringing order out of chaos and filling the leadership void. Lt. General Russel Honoré, more than any other individual, came to symbolize what was going right with the relief and recovery effort.

While he has certainly found success in the military, Honoré gives much of the credit for his achievements to being raised on a farm and to his agriculture teacher, Mr. Roland Roberts. "I attribute much of who I am today to my father and to Mr. Roberts," Honoré says. "They taught me the value of hard work, of utilizing all of your assets, of doing things correctly and the importance of leadership."

Honoré was pleased to learn of the *Seeds of Hope* campaign and all the efforts being made by members and advisors across the country to help rebuild the Gulf Coast. "I believe that FFA members and their advisors can play a significant role in the rebuilding effort," he says. "Being a part of a large organization like the FFA is very significant because of the leadership component. Additionally, because of their backgrounds, FFA members and advisors understand fundamentally how to make things happen."

To learn more about Honoré's agriculture roots and his thoughts regarding how Team Ag Ed can help the Gulf Coast recover, see the January issue of *FFA Advisors Making a Difference*.



Members of the Ponchatoula, La., FFA Chapter send their thanks to those who contributed to the *Seeds of Hope* campaign for financial assistance to attend the national convention.



Alumni Convention Highlights

the 33rd National FFA Alumni Convention began with the awards session on Thursday, Oct. 27. President Sonny Deke called the meeting to order and Doug Loudenslager, chief operating officer, brought greetings. Keynote speaker, Sam Glenn motivated, renewed and challenged the crowd with the use of artwork to convey an inspiring and uplifting message. His painting was also sold at Friday night's National FFA Alumni benefit auction.

The session continued with the recognition and honoring of many FFA Alumni state associations, local affiliates, and individuals who are key to the success of

alumni. More than \$111,681 was awarded to alumni members, alumni affiliates, FFA members and FFA chapters in leadership scholarships, awards, rebates, Local Program Support grants and educational scholarships. The session was followed by an appreciation reception for alumni members and their guests along with entertainment by upcoming country singer Dustin Wilkes.

The National FFA Alumni Convention business session was held Friday morning, October 28. A record number of 158 voting delegates representing 27 states registered for the session. The main item of business was the passing of two new amendments to the National FFA Alumni Association bylaws. The delegates also voted on the new officers to represent them on the Alumni Council for the coming year.



By Frank Saldaña,
Executive Director
National FFA Alumni
Association

The Alumni Council election results follow:

- President: Norman Gay, Georgia
- President-Elect: Monte Ladner, Mississippi
- Southern Region: Ronnie Ansley, North Carolina
- Member-At-Large: Jim East, Georgia
- Member-At-Large: Kristina Watson, Pennsylvania



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The Cargill Community Scholarship Program will award \$1,000 scholarships to 350 high-school seniors in the 2005-2006 school year.

The scholarship recipients' schools will receive a small grant to support the school library.

Cargill Community scholarships are available to both FFA and non-FFA members.

The program is for high-school seniors who live near a Cargill community.

**Watch for details in the
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Local Program Success

Motivation is Key When It Comes to Recruiting and Retaining Students



By Jill Casten
Collegiate Program Manager
National FFA Organization

the heart of the National FFA Organization lies at the local level; more specifically, it lies within the individual student. We all know this to be true. However, there is a common struggle faced by many agricultural education programs and FFA chapters: How do we recruit the individual student and then motivate that student to stay involved?

Motivation is where it all begins. To recruit and retain good students, we must strive to understand what makes each of them "tick." Each student is motivated to join, belong and be active by different things.

Motivation Theory

A theory of motivation as described by Barbuto and Scholl (1998) explains five different sources of motivation. By better understanding these five sources of motivation, we can strive to develop a program designed to fit the needs of all students.

The first is motivation by **intrinsic process**. This can be described as a person who is motivated to work or to participate for the sheer fun of it. These students want to belong because it is fun and they enjoy it. Keep these students interested by allowing time for fun and social activities at chapter events and in the classroom.

If a student's motivation is **instrumental**, they are motivated by rewards. These students are motivated when they think their behavior will lead to certain outcomes, such as awards, offices, etc. Motivate these students by providing special opportunities and rewards for participating or accomplishing tasks.

External self-concept is the source of motivation that tends to be externally based and focused on personal reputation. This type of student concentrates primarily on others and seeks approval from them. They are motivated to behave in ways to satisfy the group and gain acceptance from their peers. Pay special attention to these students through praise and recognition in front of others.

A student can also be motivated by **internal self-concept** motivation. This source of motivation is focused on the inner self. This student sets his or her own

goals and will be driven to act based upon these standards and achieving higher levels of competency. You can motivate these students by assigning challenging work and creating opportunities for them to develop skills.

The final source of motivation is **goal internalization**. This type of motivation occurs because the student believes in the cause and, therefore, is motivated to work towards the goal of the organization. Involve these students by having them assist with establishing the mission and goals for the program.

Incorporate Each Source

An important factor to note: No student is exclusively motivated by one source, and each source can exist in some degree. While there is no magic formula to recruiting and retaining members, continue to try and provide various activities and opportunities for students so that all sources of motivation are provided.



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.

Recruitment, Retention and Diversity

Our profession has been unable to fill all of the openings for agriculture teachers in the United States for a single year since at least 1965. The challenge lies within four separate areas, not just one:

Challenge # 1: Recruiting

We turn out enough graduates each year to fill the demand for new teachers, but historically, only about half of the new agricultural education graduates take teaching jobs. If agricultural education is to continue to be successful, it is teachers who must make it happen.

Challenge # 2: Accessibility of Teacher Education

We have been losing agriculture teacher education programs for the past 20 years. For states with small numbers of high school programs, it is hard to justify

a full-time agriculture teacher education program at the university. We must find a way to increase the accessibility of teacher education, especially in those states lacking programs.

Challenge # 3: Diversity

The population in this country is becoming more diverse every year; agricultural education is no exception. A small but significant number of our teachers are African-American and Hispanic, but only a small number are of Native American, Asian or Pacific Island descent. The same is true of female teachers. Agriculture teachers are disproportionately white, non-Hispanic males. As a profession, we are long overdue in addressing the lack of diversity in our teaching force.

Challenge # 4: Retention of Beginning Teachers

About half of all beginning agriculture teachers leave the classroom within the



By Bill Camp
President, American
Association for Agricultural
Education (AAAE)

first five years. Although that is normal in any profession, it is still a problem. Teaching any subject is difficult, but teaching agriculture can be particularly demanding for a young teacher.

If the agricultural education profession is to continue to be a successful program, it is the teachers who will make it so. The profession must take a more active role in recruitment of potential teachers, with an emphasis on diversity. We must find a way to increase the accessibility of teacher preparation programs, especially in those states lacking agriculture teacher education programs at the university level. And, finally, we must take a more active role in the retention of young teachers in the classroom.

Professional Growth

Start Thinking Scholarships Now!

each year the National FFA Organization awards more than \$2 million in scholarships to its members. There are many different types of scholarships designed to fit the wide variety of FFA members.

Scholarships are given for a diverse array of experiences, career goals and higher education plans. Grades are one criterion for selection, but FFA takes into account the whole student. Some criteria vary by scholarship, but all of them take into consideration a student's FFA involvement, community service, leadership activities and SAE.

The scholarship funding is provided by numerous sponsors through the National FFA Foundation, and new scholarships are added every year.



The 2006 scholarship application and guidebook was mailed to all FFA chapters earlier this fall. In addition, you and your members may download the guidebook and application from the FFA website [www.ffa.org/programs/scholarships/]. You'll also find answers to frequently asked questions and a link to the list of Ford dealers who are participating in the scholarship program.

For more information, visit
www.ffa.org/programs/scholarships/
or send an e-mail message to
[\[scholarships@ffa.org\]](mailto:scholarships@ffa.org).





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Visit www.ffa.org/programs/riskmgt for rules of entry. Contact riskmanagement@ffa.org or **317.802.4288** for more information.

The Risk Management Essay Contest is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture–Risk Management Agency. All entries must be postmarked by January 31, 2006. Send your entry to the Risk Management Essay Contest, National FFA Organization, 6060 FFA Drive, P.O. Box 68960, Indianapolis, IN 46268.

RISK
management



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 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. 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.

TeacherResources

Free Soils Resources from NRCS/USDA

The Natural Resources Conservation Service, a USDA agency, is an outstanding resource for teaching materials on soils. From its useful Web Soil Survey Page that allows users to view and download soil survey maps, to classroom materials designed to help teachers (K-12), these resources make the subject of soils interesting and fun.

The value of these products became evident at the recent national FFA convention as NRCS staff spent three days demonstrating the material to every teacher who stopped by the exhibit. According to NRCS staff, "We ran out of all our great educational material by the second day and had to improvise to meet the demand."

Materials distributed at the convention included a soils CD containing everything from lesson plans to PowerPoint presentations, lab activities, hands-on projects and much, much more. In addition to the soils CD, NRCS had available a text book entitled, *From the Surface Down*, and a beautiful poster entitled, *12 Orders of Soil Taxonomy*. For those teaching in a more urban setting, there is a CD entitled, *Urban Soil Primer*, and a text book with the same name. These are only a few of a huge inventory of materials and products available at no charge.

Materials can be ordered by visiting either <http://soils.usda.gov/education/> or <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/education/>. Click on "Publications" in the navigation bar, or call 402-437-5499.

Activity-Based Physics

This website presents "thinking problems" for physics topics: vectors, kinematics, momentum, circular motion, universal gravitation, sound, energy, temperature and circuits. Problems include designing a roller coaster, riding a bicycle efficiently, tailgating, tuning a radio, electrical safety, and how bats and

dolphins "see" with sound (echolocation). These activities can be great for extra credit or keeping your high-academic students engaged. Visit www.physics.umd.edu/rgroups/ripe/perg/abp/.

Science and Math Collaborative Projects

The Center for Innovation in Engineering and Science Education provides inquiry-based activities and collaborative projects in science and math. Topics include real-time weather and climate data, air pollution, remote sensing data, the Gulf Stream, water use and testing around the world, boiling water, plants and animals in your schoolyard, measuring the circumference of earth, population growth, and tracking a real airplane in flight to see how vectors and trigonometry are used for navigation. Visit www.ciese.org/currichome.html.

Current Events in Science and Technology

The Current Science & Technology Center looks at science and technology in the news, including leading-edge research and exploration. Learn about the fats of life, Ritalin, garlic, carbon nanotubes, stem cells, diabetes, experiments in near-zero gravity, visualizing influenza, growing heart cells, regenerative medicine, amorphous metals (metallic glasses), and nanotechnology by visiting www.mos.org/cst/index.html.

Nanoworld Teaching Modules

Exploring the Nanoworld Teaching Modules are available to help teachers incorporate nanotechnology into high school and middle school technology classes. High school modules explore x-ray diffraction and scanning probe microscopy, shape-memory alloys, light-emitting diodes, and ferrofluid. Middle school modules examine magnetism, memory metals, and "how we can 'see' what we cannot see." Modules include overviews,

curriculum suggestions, lesson plans, guided notes, experiments and assessments. You can access the teaching modules at www.mrsec.wisc.edu/Edetc/modules/index.html.

Global Warming Resource

The "Global Warming Facts and Our Future" website explores the latest scientific information from the National Academy of Sciences. Is our climate warming? If so, are humans causing it? What might be the effects? What can be done? Learn about the greenhouse effect, the carbon cycle and past changes in our climate. See predicted changes and how they could affect sea levels, agriculture and ecosystems. Find out about options for reducing carbon dioxide emissions and more at <http://www.koshlandscience.org/exhibit-gcc/index.jsp>.

DNA Resource

"Putting DNA to Work," online at www.koshlandscience.org/exhibitdna/index.jsp. looks at where DNA is found, similarities in the DNA of humans and other species, and how traits are inherited from one generation to the next. Learn how DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), discovered 50 years ago, is used today to detect diseases, improve crops and catch criminals.

More Nanotechnology Resources

The Madison Materials Research Science and Engineering Center introduces students to nanotechnology. Learn how we can "see" atoms, manipulate them and create nano-architectural wonders. Watch nanoscience demonstrations. Read profiles of nanotechnologists. Review nanotechnology slide shows and course descriptions. Manipulate an interactive polyhedral model. All of this and more may be found at www.mrsec.wisc.edu/Edetc/index.html.

Are you **19-22?**

Is **production agriculture**
YOUR career choice?

Are you
currently attending
college?



The **NEW CENTURY FARMER PROGRAM**, sponsored by Pioneer Hi-Bred International and Rabobank in cooperation with the National FFA Organization, is intended to help young, prospective farmers see the exciting opportunities available to them in the 21st century. The time has never been better to be in the farming business. Here is an opportunity that can help pave the way for young people to be successful in this arena.

If selected as a New Century farmer, you will participate **IN AN ALL-EXPENSE PAID EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR AROUND THE MIDDLE OF JULY 2006**. During the seminar, you will learn how farmers can profit from visioning, value-added products, new technology, new farm business opportunities and business alliances with other producers; learn ways to overcome common challenges faced by young farmers; network with a group of extraordinary young people who are excited about pursuing production agriculture as a career; connect with an innovative farmer-mentor who can share his/her experiences in farming.



Applicants must be attending a 2 or 4 year post secondary institution with a major in agriculture, between the ages of 19-22 (must be 19 by March 1, 2006) with plans to go into production agriculture after school. The application will be available to download from www.ffa.org/programs/ncfarmer/index on October 15, 2005.



Toyota Community Scholars Program

The Toyota Community Scholars program applications were mailed to high school guidance counselors each September. While each school system has its own system for selecting its nominee, FFA members should be encouraged to be pro active.

If you have students who have significant community service experience, tell them about this program and encourage them to approach the guidance department and share their interest in the program.

Each participating school submits its nominee's application in early December. The Toyota Community Scholars program is administered by Educational Testing Services in Princeton, N.J. Each year, a panel of college and university admissions officials from across the United States selects 12 national winners (\$20,000 each) and 88 regional winners (\$10,000 each). For more information, visit www.toyota.com/communityscholars.

Update on 2006–2010 National FFA Awards and CDE Revisions

The 2006-2010 Awards and CDE revision process has been completed and fully implemented for programs leading to participation at the 2006 National FFA Convention in Indianapolis.

Please note some information has been updated since the Local Program Resource Guide was released this summer. The most current version of all applications and award handbooks is now available through the National FFA website (www.ffa.org). Please make sure that, as you prepare for national participation in 2006, you take time to

become familiar with the new information, guidelines and policies concerning awards and CDE programs. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mike Honeycutt, education specialist, at mhoneycutt@ffa.org or 317-802-4262.



2006 National FFA Convention Registration – Indianapolis Housing Incentive

The registration fee for the 2006 National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Ind., has been set by the National FFA Board of Directors at \$30 per person for those using the Indianapolis housing block. For those not using the official Indianapolis housing block, the standard \$40 registration fee will apply. The \$40 fee will also apply to those who drive in locally to the convention.

This two-tiered fee structure will ensure that the cost of the convention facilities – which includes Conseco Fieldhouse, the RCA Dome, the Indianapolis Convention Center and the Indiana State Fairgrounds – is shared equally by all convention participants, regardless of their housing plans.

Just as was done in Louisville, a small portion of the daily room rates charged by the hotels in the official FFA housing block will be used by the Indianapolis Convention and Visitors Association to pay for the convention facilities. Since those outside the official housing block do not contribute to that portion of the facility payment, the incentive discount does not apply.

The National FFA Organization continues to find ways to provide a high-quality, convenient and affordable convention experience. The easy way to book your convention rooms is through the Indianapolis housing block,

and you can save \$10 on each convention registration. Your per-person discount will benefit not only your chapter and its members, but the entire FFA organization as well.

Software Updates Available for New Professionals Kit (PC Version) and LifeKnowledge Version 2.0



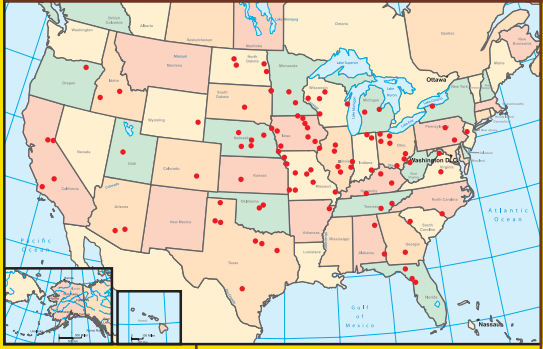
There are updates available to improve program effectiveness for software available from the National FFA

Organization. For all FFA customers who received the PC version of New Professionals Kit (NPK) between March 1, 2005 and July 18, 2005, there are updates for the calendar system. For all FFA customers who received LifeKnowledge Version 2.0 between March 1, 2005 and October, there are updates to correct the printing issues that have been discovered. Please visit <http://patch.adayana.com/ffa/> to download the updates.

2006 Career Clusters Institute

Register today for the 2006 Career Clusters Institute. The event, themed, "Aligning Education for the Competitive Edge," will be held June 12-14, 2006, at the Pointe Hilton Tapatio Cliffs Resort in Phoenix, Ariz. For details and to register, visit www.careerclusters.org/marketing.cfm. If you are interested in being a speaker at the institute, complete the Call for Presentations Application (available at www.careerclusters.org/pdf/CallforPresentations.pdf) and submit by December 18.

FFA students from all over the country have finished a winner in our competition...YOU could be next!



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Fix It!
Finish A Winner!

With the 2006 TRACTOR RESTORATION COMPETITION

FFA Students! We want to give you cash for restoring your classic farm tractor from the inside out. Amaze us with your restoration effort and you could WIN up to \$2,500!

For additional information on how to participate and to download the workbook, call us at (888) 385-4026 or visit www.chevron-lubricants.com (click on farming).



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Look for your next issue of *FFA Advisors Making a Difference* in January. It will feature stories on professional development, as well as provide teaching resources and FFA news.