



FFA ADVISORS

Making a Difference

teaching leading learning

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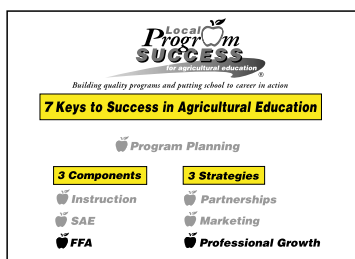
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Watch for the LPS Logo

The logo below 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.



Life-Long Learning = Professional Development

Agriculture teachers are great at helping their students create plans for advancement in many areas—classroom, SAE, FFA and many more. However, they don't always focus that same energy and insight on themselves.

might provide insight into the way our country was developed around the agrarian ideal. Taking time to read a professional journal might provide insight or suggested classroom management tactics you could apply in your program.

Develop a Plan

You know the cliché about failing to plan is planning to fail. Take that message to heart and apply it to your own career. What will you do in the coming year to develop professionally? Spend some quiet time mapping out your plan of action and get it on the calendar. Agriculture teachers are busy people, and are pulled in many directions. If you don't block out time for yourself, it won't happen.

When you create your plan, start with the basics: attend your state in-service training sessions, workshops offered by your school district or state teacher training institution and teacher-focused activities at FFA events. But, don't stop there.

Learn to Prioritize

One of the most difficult lessons to learn is managing the all-too-precious commodity of time. Because much of your time is already scheduled for you, it is all that much more important to prioritize the key items that must be accomplished during your planning period or unscheduled time.

Start with the basics: make a to-do list every day and prioritize everything on it. Take a hard look at the list and determine what could be delegated to others, particularly students. The more tasks you can hand off, the more time you'll have to focus on the really big items. Plus, when you give students responsibility, they learn lessons in the process. It's a win-win situation.

Think Outside the Box

Many different activities can help you develop professionally. For example, list several areas in which you'd like to improve your skills or knowledge base—anything from animal anatomy to history to politics to classroom management. Then, seek out reading material, websites or television programming in those areas. For example, watching a PBS special on Thomas Jefferson

Have Fun

Remember what your mother told you about all work and no play. To stay fresh, we all need to take time to recharge our batteries. This is a critical component to professional development. Take charge of your calendar and make sure it includes time for recreation, exercise and family.



New Initiative To Support, Reward Ag Teachers

You will soon have more tools and support to do your job, thanks to a major new agricultural education initiative launched last fall. The program, sponsored through a \$200,000 donation from Syngenta and coordinated by the National FFA Organization, supports the recruitment, retention and recognition of teachers in agricultural sciences.

"Our vision at Syngenta is to deliver better food to a better world through innovative crop solutions for growers and the food and feed chain. The continued success of agriculture depends on the education of crop producers and of the people who support them in their jobs," says Bob Woods, chairman of Syngenta Corporation, U.S. "We are pleased to partner with FFA on this effort to strengthen agricultural education in North America," he added.

A key to the education program is recognizing and rewarding teachers who excel in teaching the agricultural sciences. Syngenta is sponsoring the development of new state and national awards programs. The National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) Outstanding Agricultural Education Award recognizes the efforts of state winners and six regional winners in developing outstanding education programs for high school agriculture programs. The NAAE Outstanding Post-Secondary Agriculture Program will likewise reward state winners and six regional winners for accomplishments in teaching at the post-secondary community college level.

One teacher, Jodi Geiger of Florida, was chosen as the spokesperson for the education program. She will participate in a media tour to highlight the importance of agricultural education, and will take a trip to Switzerland to tour Syngenta's global headquarters. See story on page 10.

According to Dr. Larry Case, coordinator of Agricultural and Rural Education for the U.S. Department of Education and national FFA advisor, the sponsorship also will support production and distribution of a number of materials for current and potential agriculture educators – including this *Making a Difference* newsletter!

"The key to success with improving the future for agricultural education is partnerships between the public and private sectors – between the educators, government bodies, organizations and businesses that are focused on agriculture. We hope this program between Syngenta and the FFA will be a model for how such partnerships can work," says Case.

Through the new program, career assessment tools for both high school and collegiate students will be developed to highlight the benefits of a teaching career in agriculture. Also, a number of tools will provide current agriculture teachers with "best practices" and resources to help them achieve success in their classrooms.

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.

Important Contacts at the National FFA Center

FFA Staff	317-802-6060
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FFA website	http://www.ffa.org

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/news/html/ffapubsindex.html.

Perspectives

The Value of One... The Power of All

In this time of change and challenge in our nation and organization, it is important to recognize the power we have and what we can achieve when we work together.

The 2002 NAAE Conference was a great example of what happens when we all pull together. Through the conference, we strive to empower those in attendance so that they can return home and empower others. We are challenged to solve the teacher shortage, strengthen our Team Ag Ed, be visible legislatively, and at the same time, keep our heads above water with challenges we face on a daily basis.

Provide Mentorship to Others

Teacher recruitment and retention are the top priority of the agricultural education family. The power lies within us to solve the issue. Most agriculture educators have someone in their past or present who has helped them through the rough spots to achieve professional and personal growth. Rather than only during a convention, this mentoring is a daily, weekly or monthly activity. Educators helping educators at the grassroots level is the key to longevity in our profession and helps address the shortage of professionals in agricultural education.

I encourage each of you to make a difference in the level of success someone else achieves. The NAAE Teacher Mentor Award, sponsored by CEV Multimedia, recognizes those who have been influential in mentoring others. Who mentored you? Chances are there was someone who took a special inter-

est in helping you succeed. Consider a personal thanks to your mentor and consider becoming a mentor to another person in our profession.

Legislative Advocacy

As an NAAE officer, I've had the privilege to travel to meetings in Washington, D.C. During these trips, I've met with staff members who represent my state's elected officials to deliver messages regarding items of interest to agricultural education, including the two-year Postsecondary Agricultural Education Challenge Grants, the proposed School Environment Protection Act, and the Perkins reauthorization and appropriations. This was a very positive experience.

Yet, I was surprised to learn that those with whom I spoke knew very little about agricultural education. We trust our elected officials to make decisions on our behalf, but we are not doing enough to educate them about the importance and effects of their decisions. The powers that be DO NOT have a good understanding of agricultural education. We need to educate our legislators so they are truly working for us rather than against us. From the NAAE website, I encourage you to use our Legislative Advocacy Center (Capitol Advantage) for progress in your state as well as on the national level. Make a trip to your state capital or Washington, D.C., and educate your legislators about our profession.

Best wishes for the year ahead, and remember the power we have when we work together toward common goals.



By Sarah Osborn Welty
President, National
Association of
Agricultural Educators



A Recipe for Ego Biscuits

Billye Foster, Ed.D., is one of those timeless agricultural educators who can find unique ways to intrigue her students and engage their minds in whatever the topic of the day. Foster is an associate professor of agricultural education at the University of Arizona. She invests her time, talent and energy developing the next generation of agriculture teachers and possesses significant insight on professional development, and, how to attract those ever helpful “ego biscuits.”

Keep it Fresh

“If you’re going to be in education, I firmly believe you need to be a life-long learner,” Foster says. “You need to learn new and different things on a regular basis to keep your edge. When you lose the desire to learn, you become stale. I think that’s a key point for all of us in education.”

Foster is quick to note that learning shouldn’t be confined to formal classroom settings and encourages educators to be open to absorbing ideas from many different areas. “If your mind is open and you’re looking for things, it’s amazing how many ideas you can pull out of everyday life and plug into your classes. I’ve found interest approaches everywhere from Animal Planet programs to K-Mart. The key is you have to open yourself for that magical, teachable moment.”

Student-Centered Approach

Foster asserts that a teacher’s energy level is transferred to the students and bounces back to the teacher. “If you’re not having any fun in the classroom, I can guarantee your students aren’t.



Foster works with a graduate student to finalize a project.

Make an effort to inject enthusiasm and fun into your lessons. Nothing satisfies an educator like watching the lights of learning blink on in their students’ minds. That happens much more frequently when we, as teachers, focus our energy like a laser on student success.”

Along that line, Foster encourages teachers to remember they teach students, not agriculture. “We teach people. Ag is a vehicle, a subject. It’s a subject that is near and dear to our hearts, but it is not the main point. We must use our power as teachers to engage our students so that they, too, care about the subject matter. You can’t do that if you focus on the subject matter. Focus on the students.”

Work the System

One area Foster cautions her students about is that of bureaucratic systems. “As educators, we tend to work in schools that are governed by

bureaucracies. As such, we are often dealing with what I term ‘the evils of the system.’ Some of these, budget cuts for example, don’t have anything to do with student success and, in fact, can sometimes be construed as counter productive. One of the gifts of age, I suppose, is wisdom. You realize that this, too, will pass. Rather than continually fighting the system, learn how to work the system for the betterment of your program.”

Keep it Positive

Everyone’s life experience can sometimes seem like a rollercoaster ride of highs and lows. Foster says, “Everyone hits the low spots and it can be easy to turn away, to build walls and try to block things out. However, when we learn to take those rough spots and learn from them, we’ll find we hit fewer of them. Another key point to remember is that we are all influenced by the people in our lives. Surround yourself with positive people who challenge you to be your very best.”

Which brings us to ego biscuits. In Foster’s world, ego biscuits are an essential ingredient to keep teachers motivated. “Teachers don’t do what they do just for a paycheck. Ego biscuits are those little tidbits of positive feedback that motivates each of us to be our best and put forth extra effort. It’s a student who graduated coming back to visit and thanking you for what you did for him or her. It’s a parent saying how you helped his or her child learn responsibility. Those are the ego biscuits that sustain us as teachers and provide the extra ‘nutrition’ we all need to grow professionally.”

Preparing for the Future While Preserving the Past

Many FFA chapter members are digging through dusty boxes of memorabilia and discovering their chapters' histories during this year of celebrating the 75th anniversary of FFA. David Laatsch, the Beaver Dam FFA Chapter advisor in Beaver Dam, Wis., feels fortunate to be teaching in this chapter at this juncture in history.

"I'm only the third lead teacher in this agriculture department since its inception as a Smith-Hughes program in 1927," Laatsch says. "From a historical perspective, I value the fact that all three of us have been pack rats. We have great scrapbooks and records back to 1927."

Scrapbook Restoration

As part of the chapter's 75th celebration preparation, Beaver Dam FFA members are working with local alums to restore the scrapbooks and preserve artifacts that are showing their age. "Many of the older newspaper clippings are becoming very brittle," Laatsch says. "The students are working with alums to preserve those articles along with the photographs and other artifacts. They are organizing this volume of material and placing it into new official FFA scrapbooks that we purchased."

Along with the memorabilia the chapter has saved, a number of community members are stepping forward and presenting treasures from their own collections. "A gentleman who was a Greenhand in 1930 has presented us with his FFA letter," Laatsch says. "In those days, students were present-

ed with a letter for FFA activities similar to the way they receive letters for athletics today. This gentleman earned his letter in poultry judging."

When the scrapbooks are completed, chapter members will work with media specialists at the school to scan many of the items, create a video and burn the program to DVDs as part of the celebration. They will also provide a number of VHS dubs for community members.

Alumni Interviews

Along the way, students are reconnecting with community members and learning life lessons. "Each student was assigned to choose a former member, research that member's involvement while they were in high school, then contact and interview that person," Laatsch says. "The end goal is to create a series of brief stories that capture where people started out and where they went along with what they most value from their FFA experience."

One student learned a valuable lesson about timeliness the hard way. "This student, who tends to be a procrastinator, selected a person and had done his research in our chapter archives," Laatsch says. "However, he hadn't connected with the gentleman and done the interview. Unfortunately, the alum the student had chosen passed away. When I told the student this news, he broke down in tears as reality hit. Not only had he failed to complete his assignment, but he knew instantly that he had let the chapter down because he had missed the opportunity to get the information and capture history. It was quite a lesson."



Beaver Dam FFA members share a moment reviewing the newly restored scrapbooks with an alumnus, Howard Giegelske, chapter president 1941, 42 and 43.

Laatsch reports that this project has provided students with invaluable experiences as they connect with older generations. "My students are finding that their predecessors did many of the same things they are doing," Laatsch says. "And, they're discovering how people value those experiences. It helps them understand that what they're learning today, they'll use for the rest of their lives. Plus, they are building a lot of cross-generational bonds on a very personal basis."

Advisor Responsibility

At the end of the day, Laatsch stresses the importance of advisors taking a lead role in preserving chapter history. "We are really the ones responsible for setting the expectation and passing along solid records to the next generation. If we establish the tradition and set the expectation, others will follow," he says. "If we truly believe in the FFA Creed—achievements won by present and past generations—then we must preserve our past. If we are to build on tradition as we work toward the future, we must preserve our past."

NAAE Conference Highlights

Warm smiles, friendly handshakes, plenty of hugs and the occasional practical joke were all in attendance at the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) Conference in Las Vegas last December.

In addition to attending professional development workshops and tours, listening to motivational speakers, selecting a new slate of officers and completing association business, conference attendees took in the sights and sounds of Las Vegas. Many attendees took advantage of the fact that the National Finals Rodeo was in town and attended a performance of this American original. Beyond the conference schedule, which was chock-full of professional development opportunities, attendees renewed old acquaintances, made new ones and absorbed volumes of information.

The conference focused on its theme of "The Value of One – The Power of All." The meeting was dedicated to the late Bryan Gause, who was serving as NAAE president when he passed away in February 2002.

Recognition Programs

Agriculture teachers are an interesting bunch. They work diligently day after day to help their students understand agriculture, develop leadership skills and, along the way, learn life's lessons. They strive to enable their students to receive recognition through the myriad of FFA award and incentive programs. The paradox is that these teachers rarely seek recognition themselves.

Thank goodness organizations such as NAAE and FFA seek out teachers who are doing outstanding work, recognize them for their efforts,



Outstanding Agricultural Education Teachers L to R: NAAE President Sarah Osborn Welty, Landrus, Stevens, Hehn, Garrett, Geiger, Heyler and Lori Captain, Sygenta representative.

and share their stories of success from which others may learn and grow professionally. During the NAAE Annual Conference, an outstanding group of teachers was recognized.

Outstanding Young Member Awards

In any organization, young members are the seeds from which the organization grows. NAAE recognizes its young members for their successes in the classroom through the Outstanding Young Member Awards Program. NAAE members who have been in the classroom for at least three but not more than five years are eligible to compete for this honor, which is sponsored by John Deere as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

The 2002 Outstanding Young Member regional winners are:

- Region I: Katie Lynn Thalman, North Summit High School, Coalville, Utah
- Region II: Steven D. Mitchell, Melbourne High School, Pineville, Ark.
- Region III: Tim Heeg, Marshfield Senior High School, Marshfield, Wis.
- Region IV: Darryl J. Matherly, Meade County High School, Brandenburg, Ky.

- Region V: Michael Honeycutt, Triton High School, Erwin, N.C.
- Region VI: Robin C. McLean, Penns Grove High School, Pitman, N.J.

Outstanding Agricultural Education Teacher Awards

This award area recognizes teachers who are at the pinnacle of their profession—those who are conducting the highest quality agricultural education programs. The award criteria include leadership in civic, community, agriculture/agribusiness and professional activities as well as student success. This award is sponsored by Syngenta as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

The Outstanding Agricultural Education Teacher regional winners are:

- Region I: Glen A. Landrus, Asotin High School, Clarkston, Wash.
- Region II: Shirley Stevens, Chickasha High School, Chickasha, Okla.
- Region III: Darold Hehn, Rapid City Schools, Rapid City, S.D.
- Region IV: Randy Garrett, Mount Vernon High School, Carl Junction, Mo.
- Region V: Jodi N. Geiger, Pine Ridge High School, Edgewater, Fla.

- **Region VI:** Martin C. Heyler, Cowanesque High School, Westfield, Pa.

In addition, Syngenta representatives interviewed the six teachers listed above for the Syngenta Agricultural Education Award. See the story on page 11.

Outstanding Middle/Secondary Program Awards

Recognizing outstanding agricultural education programs is the objective of this award, which is sponsored by Case IH as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

The Outstanding Middle/ Secondary Program regional winners are:

- **Region I:** Elko High School, Elko, Nev. (Jim Cooney, Shane Sutton and Jared Hyatt, teachers)
- **Region II:** Amber-Pocasset High School, Amber, Okla. (Billy Shane Scott, teacher)
- **Region III:** McCook High School, Salem, S.D. (Terry Reickman, teacher)
- **Region IV:** Lowell High School, Lowell, Mich. (John Schut and Tammy DeBaar, teachers)
- **Region V:** Franklin County High School, Carnesville, Ga. (Wayne Randall, Gary Minyard, Owen Thomason and Cale Watkins, teachers)
- **Region VI:** Linganore High School, Frederick, Md. (Tom Hawthorne and Pat Beachy, teachers)

Teacher Mentor Awards

In one way or another, everyone has a mentor. In agricultural education, it is critical that teachers have someone with whom they can talk, ask questions and share ideas. The NAAE Teacher Mentor Award recognizes those educators who lend a hand to others and mentor others in the profession. This award is sponsored by CEV Multimedia as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

The Teacher Mentor regional winners are:

- **Region I:** Dale Crawford, Culver High School, Terrebonne, Ore.
- **Region II:** Van M. Chew, Konawa High School, Konawa, Okla.
- **Region III:** Larry Griffin, Minnesota West Community & Technical College, Jackson, Minn.
- **Region IV:** Floyd Beneker, Marshall High School, Marshall, Mich.
- **Region V:** Lee James, Choctaw County Career & Technology Center, Weir, Miss.
- **Region VI:** Sally Shomo, Beverly Manor High School, Staunton, Va.

In all award areas, winners are selected in each of NAAE's six regions. Applications, which are available online at [www.naae.org], are due at the state level by May 15, 2003.

Professional Development

Conference attendees selected from a well-stocked buffet of professional development workshops and tours. Topics included:

- Becoming a National Board Certified Teacher
- Using Technology in the Classroom
- Teach Outside the Books
- Integrating Mathematics, Agriculture and Science through Technology
- Introduction to Precision Agriculture/GPS
- Writing Successful Proposals for Competitive Grants



Teachers received hands-on experience in the floral design workshop.



- Teaching Agriscience in a Modular Format
- Is a Ph.D. for Me?
- Food, Land and People's Resources for Learning
- NFR Stock and Horse Training Tour
- Hoover Dam and Museum Tour
- Floral Design Workshop

New Board of Directors

The final item of business on the conference agenda was electing a new slate of board members to lead the organization in the coming year. Sarah Osborn Welty, Maryland, was elected president. Roger Teeple, North Carolina, was selected as president elect. Refer to the photo for the remaining board positions.

The alternate regional vice presidents elected are: Elaine Lewis (Wash.), Region I; Dr. Bill Hunter (Kan.), Region II; Tom Hofmann (Neb.), Region III; Harold Eckler (Mo.), Region IV; Dennis Deaton (Ala.), Region V; and Andy Seibel (Va.), Region VI.

The 2003 NAAE Conference will be held Dec. 9-13 at the Caribe Royale All-Suites Resort and Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. Watch for details on the NAAE website, [www.naae.org].

NAAE Board of Directors seated left to right: Sarah Osborn Welty (MD), president; and Roger H. Teeple (NC), president elect. Standing left to right: Allan Sulser (UT), Region I vice president; Larry Long (OK), Region II vice president; Paul Larson (WI), Region III vice president; Jeff Maierhofer (IL), Region IV vice president; Lee J. James (MS), Region V vice president; and Terry Hughes (NY), Region VI vice president.

Making a Difference in the Lives of Students

Editor's Note: The following story is reprinted with permission from the *Greenville Sun, Greenville, Tennessee*, where it first appeared Dec. 31, 2002.

Making a Difference in the Lives of Students

FFA at 75: Still Pointing Kids to the Long Row Ahead

This is the column I've been waiting all year to write because the dawning of 2003 is a good time to look back at my own 40 years of wandering in the desert of life.

This is also my way of saying thanks to some wonderful people who came along and made a difference at a time when I didn't have the good sense to appreciate it, but now I do.

I began taking notes for this story way back in 1958, but it was not until this year that I was bowled over by a single photograph that seemed to capture what I had been feeling for years.

In one of the dozens of farming publications that my wife says she simply can not live without, there was this full-page ad that featured a young woman with a blue corduroy jacket in her hands.

Her name is Margie Graber, and she is looking at the jacket as if she is seeing something none of the rest of us can see. Down under the photograph, there are two questions: "Was it a jacket? Or your ticket to the future?"

Contrary to what you might be thinking, the ad is not from the Future Farmers of America because no such organization exists in the world today. There was a time when the initials "FFA" indeed stood for Future Farmers of American, but those days are gone.

Now it is the "National FFA Organization," and the initials don't stand for anything. It is not the "National Future Farmers of America Organization." It is, simply, the "National FFA Organization."

When all this happened in 1988, I had a terrible falling out with the people who had the audacity to take the farmers out of the Future Farmers of America. I'm just as sorry as I can be, but I thought the wheels had come off everything when calling yourself a farmer is bad for your image.

But that was a long time ago. I have become reconciled to the fact that change will continue to sweep me along whether I like it or not, and I am no longer mad enough to fight a circle saw over something I don't like and am powerless to fix.

Part of the rationale of changing the name of the Future Farmers of America to the National FFA Organization came when those in the metropolitan states began having a problem calling themselves "farmers."

I couldn't understand the rationale at all in 1988, but now I am coming around. Besides, I'm getting too old to fight, and the prospects of confrontation are enough to drive me back to the farm where I can get lost in the solitude.

"It used to be that we were for young people going into farming; but today it is much, much more than that," said Dale Tucker, agriculture teacher at South Greene High School by day and a farmer by night.

"This is not your daddy's FFA today," he said in a way so powerful



In this scene from the early 1950s, Joe Riley, of the former Sam Riley Chevrolet Co. of Mohawk, presents the keys to this new pickup to Ed Felton, McDonald FFA advisor. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Ed Felton.

and convincing that I knew he was as serious as he could be. And when Dale Tucker gets serious and falls into line behind a cause, I know it is time for me to stop, look and listen to what he has to say.

"There's only around two percent of the entire American population involved in full-time production agriculture," he said "and the other 98 percent are involved only because they eat. A lot of us didn't like it when they changed our name in 1988, but the national leadership said it was time to make our name represent the growing diversity of agriculture, and they did it."

It was not an easy pill for many of us to swallow, but it became easier and easier as we learned that nothing much had changed except the name.

"It is still one of the greatest youth organizations in the world, if not the greatest," said Dale. "Come go with me to the national convention sometime in Louisville and I will show you 50,000 of the most outstanding young people you've ever seen assembled at one place."

Dale has been telling me that for years now, and I still haven't made it to Louisville with him. But I am convinced that he is right because, beginning in 1958, I have seen and I have felt the magic that comes with this organization, and I am here today to tell you how it happens.

Looking back at some of the things I have said since 1988, mostly to myself, it all appears pretty silly now if you want the awful truth. I figured I had every right to be a little huffy at what they were doing with my educational roots. I mean, they even changed the FFA Creed to words I had never heard before, and I was terribly upset there for several years.

Remember the old FFA Creed that began: "I believe in the future of farming with a faith born not of words but of deeds?" But who are we kidding? I didn't go into farming as a vocation. Did you?

Here's the single, sad fact that convicted me of my silliness: Of all the kids I knew from 1958 to 1962 in the Future Farmers of America, none became full-time farmers—not one. Most of us still piddle with the land, but none of us coaxes a living from it.

It is a fine thing to see the image of a young man or young woman who can take dirt, seed and fertilizer and

then feed and clothe a nation, but that's not what happened. We all became something besides farmers, so shame on me for holding onto a name that didn't apply then, and that applies even less today.

"But the FFA is still cranking out great adults," Tucker said.

Now, please, listen closely to what else this teacher, known as "Bud" to his friends, has to say about the FFA.

"Notice I didn't say that we are cranking out great kids," he said. "That's not what we are all about. Our goal is to crank out great adults from the kids who still choose to study agriculture."

And therein, ladies and gentlemen, is the secret ingredient that makes my FFA memories so sweet that I can still get lost in them. In 1958, it was the people known as FFA advisors, a title that came with being a teacher of agriculture, who taught me that farming includes honesty, leadership, character, cooperation, patriotism, humanity and a long list of other virtues far removed from plowing and harvesting. Or are they?

"They are all one in the big picture," said Fred Terry, one of the two men who were there when I was too young to know better.

The other man was Ed Felton, who introduced me to the FFA in 1958 in a fashion so remarkable that I can still hear him lecturing on the same lesson that people such as Dale Tucker are still teaching because he often touched on the long row ahead, not the transition I was experiencing in my teenage years.

When Ed Felton died in the fall of 1960, I was 16 years old, and I thought my world was ending. Here was a man who cared deeply for me and every other kid on the back roads in the western end of Greene County, and now he was gone. But the Lord is good, and He sent us Fred Terry, and I can still go to his class anytime I want to down at Bulls Gap.

Fred has been retired for several years now, but that doesn't mean he still can't be my agriculture teacher and FFA advisor. He is not only my teacher and advisor, but he is also a cherished friend who makes remembering so much fun.

When I put away my blue corduroy jacket in 1962, I knew I would never be a farmer because farming is too difficult for me. I could never do that. But that old jacket, like the one that Margie Graber is holding in her hands in the 75 anniversary ad, was not about dirt, seed and fertilizer at all. It really was about the long row of life itself.

Thanks, Ed Felton.
Thanks, Fred Terry.
Happy 75th FFA, and
long may you point
kids to that long row
ahead.

**By Bob Hurley, Columnist
The Greeneville Sun,
Greeneville, Tennessee**



It was in the early 1950s when Ed Felton, standing far right, assembled members of his Future Farmers of America chapter at the Old McDonald High School for this Mohawk memory. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Ed Felton.



*Making a
Difference
in the Lives
of Students*

Florida Teacher Receives First Syngenta Agricultural Education Award

Jodi Geiger's beaming smile said it all as she was handed the first Syngenta Advocate for Agricultural Education Award during the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) Conference in Las Vegas last December.



Jody Geiger receives the first Syngenta Agricultural Education Award from Bob Woods, chairman of Syngenta U.S.

"I was blown away when they called my name," Geiger says. "When the presenter, Bob Woods, quoted from my application before the announcement was made, I felt so honored that he felt my words were worth sharing. Then, when I heard my name, it was somewhat surreal. I was

floating on cloud nine."

Geiger, who teaches agricultural science at Pine Ridge High School in Deltona, Florida, was one of six NAAE regional finalists Syngenta interviewed for the award. The Syngenta award honors an agriculture teacher nationally for conducting the highest quality education programs. Geiger was also cited for her leadership in civic, community, agriculture/agribusiness and professional activities.

Focus Attention on Teacher Shortage

Throughout the coming year, Geiger will work with Syngenta, to focus attention on the tremendous contributions of agriculture to society and emphasize the growing need for

more students and teachers to prepare future generations of crop producers and those who support them. The shortage of agricultural science teachers is among the most serious problems facing agriculture today.

"Only 50 percent of all college students who major in agricultural education actually go into teaching when they graduate," says Bob Woods, chairman of Syngenta U.S. "Twenty-five percent of those who begin teaching quit after one year, and another 25 percent drop out within five years."

Since receiving the award in December, Geiger has been doing her part to spread the word, giving interviews to media from across the country as well as in her local area. She has also been invited to speak to a number of community organizations, including Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs, as a direct result of the award.

"One of the most gratifying things that has resulted from the award is the opportunity to speak with groups of people who aren't familiar with agricultural education and let them know the important role it plays," Geiger says. "I've stressed the need for quality teachers and that message has started hitting home, particularly with our local school board."

New Resources Coming

As a special project of the National FFA Foundation, Syngenta has provided the National FFA Organization with funding of \$200,000 for the development of a program to recruit, retain,

and reward agriculture teachers. The money will be used in a variety of ways, including a public awareness effort, production and distribution of training and support materials for current and future agriculture teachers, and workshops to help recruit new teachers to the classroom.

Integrating Agriculture

Geiger has been instrumental in creating an Agriscience Communication and Technology Academy at her school. The Academy integrates English, social studies, emerging technology and agriculture. Geiger designed the curriculum working with educators from the University of Florida's Agricultural Education and Communications Department and the Agricultural Communications Division of Walt Disney's EPCOT.

Geiger has been active in helping her students identify prospective careers in agriculture. Eleventh-grade students are required to investigate five different agribusinesses in which they are interested. As seniors, the students select one of the companies with which to participate in a three-month internship program.

Rewards

Geiger will receive an all-expense-paid trip to Basel, Switzerland, in June as part of the Syngenta award. In addition, Florida Governor Jeb Bush will recognize her in front of his cabinet in April.

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Highlighting FFA

What an amazing time to be a part of the National FFA Organization! What better way to spread the positive message of FFA than what you've done by conducting FFA Week activities. Throughout this special year, we have a wonderful opportunity to incorporate two aspects of Local Program Success—partnerships and marketing—into our chapter activities and celebrations. Having the incredible opportunity to witness multiple FFA chapters in action, I have seen a plethora of ideas that have contributed to the success of the local program.

Marketing

Due to the amount of financial stress being applied to many chapters nationwide, it is becoming increasingly more important that we market our programs to the local school administration. One of the best ways I have seen local chapters market themselves is through members serving their schools and community. A great example of this would be to empower the leaders of your chapter to conduct highly visible, service-oriented activities. For example: a chapter-sponsored breakfast for all members of the school faculty, a campus-wide cleanup done by all FFA members, or an agriculture awareness day.

Another opportunity to market the great successes of your program is through community service. Examples include adopting a highway, initiating a beautification project, or simply conducting a parliamentary procedure workshop for your local city council or a service organization such as the local Rotary or Lions Club. You can

also promote agricultural literacy in the local community with a Food for America presentation. And, it doesn't all have to be work. Host a school-wide event that includes an "Ag Olympics" followed by a motivational speaker. These are just a few examples of how FFA members can serve in their schools and communities while promoting our organization.

Marketing also comes in the form of relaying the message of the FFA brand. That is a message of hard work, success, integrity and values. It can be done in many ways. One example is conducting an "official dress day," where all FFA members wear their official dress to show their pride and generate a renewed sense of excitement within their chapter. Having chapter members meet with local city officials and explaining the importance of agricultural education could lead to greater contacts and community connections, not only for the chapter, but for individual members as well.



An additional avenue for relaying your chapter's accomplishments is the local media. Running an ad in your local newspaper, submitting press releases, or providing public service announcements for your local radio and television stations are all methods for explaining your chapters' activities and events while celebrating 75 years of success.

Partnerships

Partnerships play a vital role in the sustenance of our local programs. Certainly FFA Week can be an excellent platform to nurture existing partnerships or establish new ones, but every week offers opportunity. A great way to promote partnerships is for FFA members to commit to a one-week internship at a local business. This allows students to learn and grow while also introducing local business people to the quality of students who proudly represent our organization.

I believe that partnerships extend far beyond local business and industry. We can partner with fellow educators, local charitable organizations and individual supporters. A few ways of creating these partnerships may include: the infusion of agriculture into the teaching of other non-agriculture classes, fundraisers to raise money for local charities such as a kiss-the-pig contest, or a plant sale.

The National FFA Organization has developed materials to assist you and your members in planning community activities, marketing your program and working with partners. Many great ideas in the FFA Week materials can be applied throughout the year. I encourage you to take full advantage of these resources as you plan to spread the word about the opportunities our organization provides students as they experience premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. Good luck in celebrating 75 years of One Mission: Student Success!



By Dustin Clark,
National FFA Western
Region Vice President

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Thoughts from a First-Year Teacher:

"The Positive Things"

I have been a teacher for almost six months now. I do not claim to know everything and I probably never will, at least I hope not because then it will stop being fun.

My first few weeks of teaching were extremely challenging. After the students and I adjusted to the new situation, I felt myself becoming more comfortable not only in the classroom, but also on other excursions related to our profession.



About this time, positive things started happening. Now, don't get me wrong. There have been a lot of adjustments and things people could call negative experiences, but you just have to look at them as learning opportunities. Working with my administration, advisory committee and students has been an invaluable learning experience.

SAE Visits

The first of these positive learning experiences was the supervised agricultural experience (SAE) visit. At the university, they couldn't stress this enough. However, the lesson comes to life when you actually go on a visit.

When you visit a student and take an interest in what they are doing, the mutual respect grows immensely.

Whenever I had a student in my classroom who was giving me problems, the first thing I did was schedule an SAE visit. After the visit, I would occasionally ask the student how their program, or more importantly, how their family was doing. After the initial visit, you should see a change in the student. My best students are those I have taken the time to know outside of the regular school environment.

Call Your Colleagues

Work with your administration and school staff. I have been blessed with an awesome, supporting staff that has been able to handle every question I have had. If you don't know something, seek out someone who does and ask. Call your fellow colleagues, especially those first- and second-year teachers who are in similar situations. You'll find that things aren't as bad as they might seem once you speak with someone and discover they are experiencing the same trials and tribulations. Don't be afraid to call more experienced teachers and have them give you a boost. Both of these are excellent ways to get motivated and to further your knowledge.

Work with Volunteers

An advisory committee and alumni support are a must. Having these two organizations has helped take the stress off of me, not only regarding

curriculum and discipline, but also within the community. Countless students in this small town went home the first few weeks complaining about what a "mean" teacher I was. Having these people in my corner assuring other parents and members of the business community that I'm "okay" took a large burden off my shoulders.

Be Enthusiastic

Enjoy the students and their energy; feed off of it. I believe one of the reasons all of us choose secondary education is because we see the opportunity to make a difference at this stage in students' lives. When presenting a new lesson, be enthusiastic. Even though some of your students may not respond in class, they will remember and become excited about your lesson. They will also discuss and think about new concepts outside of class.

Finally, try new things! Whether it is in the realm of classroom management, class projects or experiments in the greenhouse, no one will blame you for trying as long as you follow through. Parents and students will accept you more if you are doing things with them.

When all else fails, just remember that we are new teachers and we will make mistakes. However, it is what we learn from our mistakes that will make us a master of the trade. Lastly, a big "thank you" to everyone who has helped this first-year teacher.

By Patrick Wellert, Chino Valley High School, Arizona

Teacher Resources

Teachers Turn the Key

NAAE is offering a new teacher recognition program targeted toward early career agriculture teachers. Sponsored by Dodge Division and DaimlerChrysler Corporation Fund as a special project of the National FFA Foundation, the "Teachers Turn the Key" program will provide travel scholarships to allow agriculture teachers with from two to four year's teaching experience to attend the 2003 NAAE Convention. One teacher per state will be honored with this recognition.

Each state's "Teachers Turn the Key" honoree will receive a scholarship for the actual costs of travel expenses, up to \$1,000, to attend the entire 2003 NAAE Convention in Orlando, Florida, Dec. 9-13. Each state agricultural education association will select its respective honoree; there will be no evaluation of the applications above the state level. Special programming will be scheduled during the convention for these early-career teachers.

Complete details for this new teacher recognition program, including the application instructions and form, are on the NAAE website at [www.naae.org/applications.htm]. May 15, 2003, is the postmark deadline for state associations to submit state winning applications to the NAAE office in Alexandria, Va.

Lesson Plans Online

Teachers can find more than 400 agriculture lesson plans online at [www.glenroseffa.org] (click on lesson plans). This catalog of resource materials has been compiled by John Jones, who teaches agriculture at Glen Rose High School in Malvern, Arkansas. The lessons have been submitted by agriculture teachers across the country.

Factory Engine School

Kohler Engines, a major manufacturer of small engines used in most professional turf equipment, will be offering a week-long, Level 1 Factory School and Certification Test Aug. 4-8, at their factory in Kohler, Wis. The cost is \$475 for single and \$350 for double accommodations. An additional \$30 fee is required for the Kohler Certified Technician Test that will be offered as an option. For additional information or to register, contact Shannon Severson at Kohler (phone: 920-457-4441, ext. 77172; e-mail: shannon.severson@kohler.com).

Horticulture Information Online

The Perishables Research Organization recently launched a free website on the care and handling of flowers and plants. The Chain of Life Network® site is a comprehensive assembly of information that can be used by educators, growers, wholesalers, florists, supermarkets, brokers, breeders, importers, bouquet manufacturers, associations, students and floral supply companies to improve the performance of cut flowers and greens, cuttings, plugs, and foliage, flowering and bedding plants. Floral marketing and consumer information is also included. It can be found at [www.chainoflifenet.org].

Biotechnology Website

DuPont is providing information on its website for educators and their students on topics related to biotechnology. The site offers information in English and Spanish on the science behind biotechnology as well as the regulatory structure and other important aspects. The site also includes links

to other resources. To browse the site, click on [www.Dupont.com/biotech/].

Doc@Distance Program

Texas A&M University and Texas Tech University have teamed up to offer an innovative joint Doctor of Education in Agricultural Education degree. In this program, students can complete their doctoral degree using the latest advancements in educational technology. Courses are taught using WebCT, a web-based set of tools, interactive television (ITV), the Internet, and a variety of other methods, including appropriate face-to-face meetings. For details, go to [<http://doc-at-a-distance.tamu.edu/>].

Horticulture Summer Short Courses

Hummert International is offering two independent short courses: Greenhouse Operations and Management, and Landscape Design and Turf Grass Management. In addition, they are offering an optional Greenhouse Design Workshop the morning prior to the Greenhouse Operation and Management short courses.

Horticulture instructors will find these short courses invaluable for honing their skills used in teaching horticulture, as well as basic on-going horticultural knowledge. Hummert International will award certificates of completion for each of the courses attended. For further information, contact Kathy Hummert or Shannon Dieckman at 1-800-325-3055 or e-mail [sales@hummert.com]. Registration is limited, so please reply as soon as possible.

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Convention Fee Increase

The National FFA Board of Directors and National Officers have set the national FFA convention attendance fee at \$30 for pre-registration and \$35 for on-site registration beginning in 2003. The action was taken to offset significant increases in costs for services, decoration, staging, labor and security. As a break-even activity, convention costs are borne by participants and not by general dues. Even with the approved increase, the \$30/\$35 FFA convention fee remains markedly lower than national meeting fees for other student organizations: VICA/Skills USA—\$90/\$100; FCCLA—\$100/\$110; and FBLA—\$85/95. Increases in the convention fee are scheduled periodically and are not expected to require adjustment for another five to seven years.

Local Program Success CD-ROMs

Requests are still being accepted from teacher educators for copies of the Local Program Resource Guide 2002-2003 CD-ROM to distribute to preservice teachers. If you have not placed or received your order, contact Michele Gilbert, mgilbert@ffa.org, 317-802-4301.

2003 National FFA Foundation Scholarship Program

This year the National FFA Foundation scholarship program will award approximately \$2 million to eligible FFA members and other agriculture students for their college education. Of those awards, Cargill will award 350 \$1,000 scholarships to

high school seniors who live in a Cargill community and plan to pursue a two- to four-year degree in any major at an accredited post-secondary institution in the fall of 2003.

Students are selected based on academic achievement and involvement in extracurricular activities. Applicants must visit their local Cargill facility or subsidiary to obtain a signature from a location manager on their application. Each scholarship recipient's high school may be eligible for a \$200 library grant.

Also as a part of those scholarship awards, Ford dealers across the country have partnered with Ford Trucks and Ford Motor Company to provide more than 400 \$1,000 scholarships to FFA members in local communities. Scholarship applicants must be planning to attend any accredited two- or four-year institution in any area of study. The dealer's signature was required for eligibility for these scholarships. One lucky chapter will be eligible to receive a Ford F-Series truck.

Last year, approximately one out of every five students who applied for a National FFA Foundation scholarship was a scholarship winner. In 2003, more than 7,000 students are expected to apply for approximately 1,600 available scholarships ranging in value from \$1,000 to \$16,340. More details about these and other National FFA Foundation scholarship opportunities, including a guidebook listing

eligibility criteria and an application, are downloadable at [<http://www.ffa.org/programs/schapp/index.html>]. The application deadline was February 15. Results will be announced around May 1.

One Mission: Student Success!

Two Minnesota FFA members provided outstanding examples of this motto when they were awarded scholarships at the 2003 Minnesota Women of Today annual convention. Every year, the MWT awards up to five scholarships to outstanding young adults. These young people must demonstrate outstanding qualities in the areas of leadership, community service and academics. As part of the program, each honoree submits 15 to 20 photos of their activities and a short essay outlining their accomplishments. Two of this year's recipients included numerous photos from their FFA activities to showcase their accomplishments.

These two young ladies are Heidi Hansen from the Glenville, Minn., FFA Chapter and Katie Mack from the Zumbrota Mazeppa, Minn., FFA Chapter. These two young women have shown that when the ideals and leadership training of FFA are put in to action, they result in success for the student and their community.



From left to right: Jen Kinzer, MWT state program manager; Heidi Hanson, Glenville FFA Chapter; Katie Mack, Zumbrota Mazeppa FFA Chapter; Amy Sandhurst; Lucas Aguilar; Lisa VonBargen and Kayla Hermann, MWT state president.

Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE) Intern

The National FFA Organization is seeking applications from qualified individuals interested in a four- to eight-week summer internship at the National FFA Center in Indianapolis, Indiana. One position will start on or shortly after June 1, 2003, and end in mid-August, while the second is basically for the month of July.

Job Description

The National FFA SAE-Based Programs interns will work with the National FFA SAE-Based activities specialist to assist with the summer processing of awards and degrees, develop promotional materials for SAE, assist in the development of instructional materials and various other responsibilities.

Position Requirements:

- **Education:** Bachelor's degree in agricultural education required.
- **Experience:** Minimum of two years of teaching experience and experiences working with students on the SAE-based activities of the National FFA Organization.
- **Relevant Experience:** Knowledge of agricultural education and the National FFA Organization are important. State and national FFA convention experience is preferred.
- **Skills:** Excellent writing and interpersonal communications skills. Project management skills essential, including scheduling, implementing and evaluating. Organizational and time management skills are critical to the success of this position. Computer proficiency is necessary using Windows 95/NT, Outlook 2000, Access 97 and FileMaker Pro.
- **Location:** The position will be located at the National FFA Center in Indianapolis, Indiana. Salary/living allowance will be a gross of \$600.00 per week. Travel to and from Indianapolis for the position will be paid.

To Apply

To be considered, e-mail your cover letter and résumé, including formal education, work experience and references, as a Word document to hr@ffa.org, confidentially fax it to (317) 802-5257 or mail it to Human Resources at:

The National FFA Organization
6060 FFA Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960
No phone calls, please. EOE

**** Applications Due April 1, 2003! ** Applications must be postmarked by April 1, 2003!**

Testing may be required. The FFA is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer and does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religion, sex, disability or national origin, including limited English proficiency, in any employment opportunity.

Vision: The Key to Alumni Volunteer Recruitment

Is your Alumni affiliate constantly recruiting new people because current members or volunteers are leaving? Or do you find it difficult to get members involved? There are right—and wrong—ways to ask people to join and keep them motivated, says Susan Ellis, author of *The Volunteer Recruitment Book*.

Recruitment Is Last Step

While most affiliates experience a rise and fall in membership periodically, the key to retention seems to rest with how and why people were initially recruited.

As an internationally known volunteer leader and presenter for more than 20 years, Ellis says the trouble starts when, “Organizations jump the gun,

spreading word of their hope for volunteer help or members prematurely.”

“Without preparation,” Ellis continues, “They run the risk of bringing out people who do not really meet their needs and are wrong for them.” Local affiliates that don’t know why they want volunteer members may find recruiting difficult, Ellis suggests.

Set a Vision

Having members or volunteers is not an end unto itself, cautions Ellis. “They are a resource and a strategy for fulfilling the Alumni’s mission.” Here are some suggestions:

- Take time to write down your affiliate’s reasons for involving members and make sure everyone—advisor, officer team and recruitment committee—agrees.
- Review the Alumni mission and determine what members are expected to do.

- Set specific goals and objectives for members. Ask, “How will they make a difference in supporting agricultural education in my community?”
- Annually review and revise your affiliate’s goals and objectives for member participation.

“Raise your affiliate’s vision about the potential for Alumni members,” Ellis asserts. “Expanded vision produces expanded results.”

Finding Members

“It is not enough to say we need members,” Ellis adds. “Developing specific jobs to recruit different types of volunteers can help gain and retain members long-term.” For example, if you’re looking to raise funds for new computer equipment, search for someone whose occupation involves computers and proposal writing.



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Looking Ahead

Look for your next issue of *FFA Advisors Making a Difference* in April. It will feature stories about Supervised Agricultural Experience programs, as well as provide teaching resources and FFA news.

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