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Integrating Academic Content

the increasing demand for accountability in education is having significant impacts on teachers and students across the country, both positive and negative. While many see the impact of the No Child Left Behind and similar state-level legislation as burdensome, others have used it to highlight how their programs help students achieve academic success by making the content relevant.

Increasing Accountability

Regardless of how you view the trend toward more accountability, all signs indicate that it will continue. As administrators across the country face the challenge of documenting student achievement, they will choose to fund only those elective programs in their schools that they perceive contribute to higher test scores. The bottom line: Agricultural education must be seen as a part of the solution; agriculture teachers must be able to demonstrate their course content is adding value to their students' overall learning, or else it could be dropped from course offerings.

This issue of *FFA Advisors Making a Difference* focuses on integrating reading, math and science content into the agriculture curriculum and provides examples of ways teachers across the country are increasing the rigor of their courses.

Small Changes = Encouraging Results

Those who have already headed down the path of increasing academic content in their agriculture courses report heartening—and encouraging—results. Cory Epler of Kansas notes that adding just a few reading strategies to your teaching repertoire can significantly improve your students' reading comprehension. (Learn more on page 7.)

C.L. McGill from Oklahoma was apprehensive about increasing the level of math he taught in his agricultural power and technology course, but he found it to be much easier and more rewarding than he had ever anticipated. Find out more about enhancing the math content in your program on pages 4-5.

Joel Rudderow from New Jersey is a full-fledged member of his school's science department and works closely with his science colleagues to ensure his students, who receive science credit for their agriculture courses, are receiving instruction in all the core science content standards. You'll find more details on page 8.

Notably, all of the teachers interviewed for this issue reported that enhancing the level of academic content did not detract from the agricultural content, but rather improved the depth of student understanding and performance. A recent nationwide study on Math in CTE reported a positive 16-point difference in end-of-course math scores with no diminishment of technical skills and abilities.

As you read this issue, think about your program and its role within your school district. Consider what techniques you could employ to enhance your students' understanding of academic content presented in an agricultural context, and what additional training or tools you might need to kick your content up a notch. Now's the perfect time to work those items in to your summer professional development plan.

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The FFA Mission

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

The Agricultural Education Mission

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

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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

Embrace the Challenge

Our world is changing at an ever-increasing pace. Globalization and the increasing role of technology are transforming the way we live and work. These forces are also changing the way we conduct business and how we educate our population.

Just 20 years ago, career and technical education programs were separated from basic academic programs; often the two were offered on completely separate campuses. This separation was more than physical. Many career and technical courses taught students how to perform tasks but didn't provide much, if any, training on the theories supporting the tasks. Conversely, in academic courses, students learned theories and principles but not how they could be applied to real-life situations.

We now understand that when we combine the two approaches in contextualized learning, students gain both academic and technical skills. Agricultural education offers a wonderful context for teaching math, science and other core academic subjects.

As an agriculture student and FFA member at Emery County High School in Utah, I learned how to apply chemistry and physics in real-world applications. I didn't meet any practitioners in my chemistry class; I met them in my agriculture class. This is the type of contextualized learning that we need to embrace heartily.

I am pleased that many of you have modified your program titles to include the term "science." There are many advantages to enhancing the level of

By Dr. Troy Justesen,
 Assistant Secretary
 Office of Vocational and
 Adult Education
 U.S. Department of Education



science you teach in your programs and using the phrase "agricultural science education." For one, it can change the way your program is perceived by administrators and policymakers.

The challenge we face is twofold. We must not only enhance the academic content of our courses, but we must also continually update and upgrade the knowledge and skills of our teacher corps.

As an example, many agriculture teachers in the classroom today were required to take little, if any, math beyond the high school level. This naturally leads to a bit of apprehension when it comes to increasing the level of math they incorporate into their curricula. If you're in this situation regarding math or another area, I encourage you to take advantage of the training opportunities that are available in your area. For example, many districts offer general continuing education courses in English, math and science. Step out of your comfort zone and increase not only your personal competencies, but also your value to your school district by completing these types of courses!

As school districts work to increase test scores, agriculture teachers have the opportunity to demonstrate they are part of the solution. Agricultural education is one of the best-kept secrets in education today. We need to share that secret with our academic colleagues and take the lead in showing others how students learn more effectively when the information is provided in a context that is meaningful to them. My best wishes for your continued success.

Enhance Math Scores, Program Credibility

What if you could work with a math teacher at your school to identify the math concepts you're already teaching in your agriculture courses and, using simple techniques, enhance your students' understanding of the math without reducing their grasp of the agricultural content?

What if by doing so you could help **increase your students' math scores and thereby gain academic credibility with your administration**? Sound too good to be true? Not so! Students and teachers from 32 Oklahoma schools participated in a study with the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education (NRCCTE) during the 2004-05 school year that demonstrated an enhanced math curriculum in the Oklahoma ag power and technology course could improve students' end-of-course math scores an average of 16 points without compromising their technical competence.

Agriculture & Math Communities of Practice

According to those who orchestrated the study, the key to success lies not in the enhanced lessons but in the interaction between the agriculture and math teachers to form "communities of practice." Each team member affects how the other works in their respective classrooms.

"The math teachers helped the agriculture teachers increase the rigor of their courses, and the agriculture teachers helped the math teachers add relevance to their courses," explains Dr. R. Brent Young, who worked with the study as part of his doctoral dissertation at Oklahoma State University.

Learn the Language; Talking the "Math" Talk

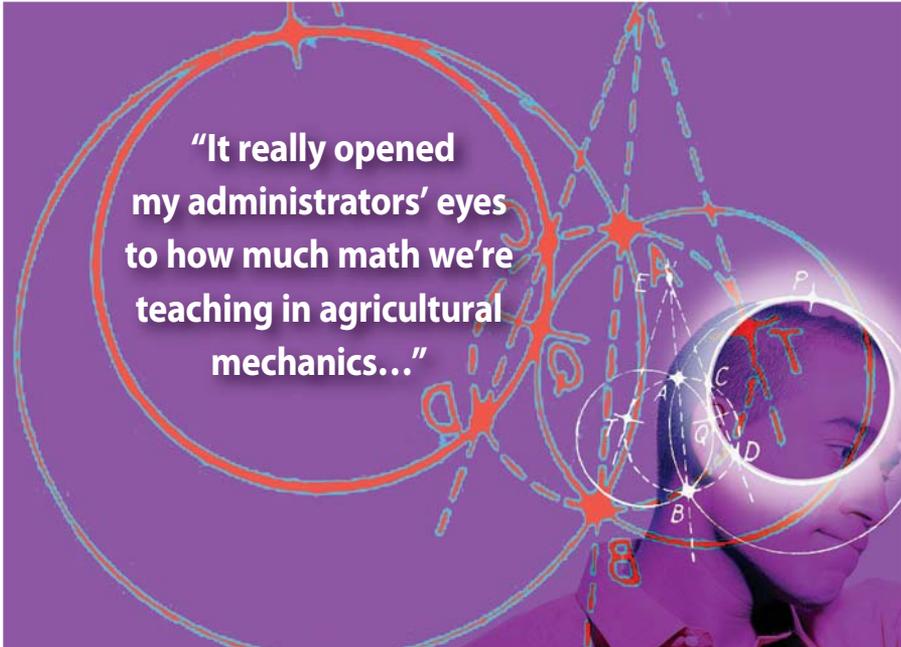
Young continues, "During this process, the agriculture teachers learned the language of math and started using it in their courses to help students understand the connections between what they were learning in math and what they were learning in agriculture. For example, I used to teach the 6-8-10 method of squaring a building, and my

students could understand how to apply it. However, I failed to connect the dots to their geometry class by informing the students that this is the same thing as the Pythagorean Theorem. That means that many of them couldn't transfer the knowledge they had gained to another topic – **it was too contextually bound to be broadly effective. When we take that simple step of incorporating the math terminology, we reinforce the math concept.**"

C.L. McGill teaches agriculture in Tuttle, Okla., and participated in the study's experimental group. "At first, I was apprehensive, and so were my students," he says. "But it didn't take long for all of us to become comfortable with the new process, and it really paid off. I had ACT prep students tell me they learned more about math from me than they did in their ACT prep work because I explained the math concepts in ways they could understand."

McGill continues, "I always made A's in math, but I didn't take anything beyond high school algebra, so I had to brush up on my math skills. Working with the math teacher really helped. She assisted in converting my "cowboy math" to the terminology used in the math classes so that I, in turn, could help students make those connections."

Along with positive feedback from the students and test scores, McGill reports a positive impact on his administrators. "It really opened my administrators' eyes to how much math we're teaching in agricultural mechanics," he says. "It was a good experience for everyone involved. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that it wasn't nearly as difficult as I thought it would be. Adding a little more structure to my lessons and incorporating the math terminology made math less intimidating for my students. It gave them more confidence in their math classes."



"It really opened my administrators' eyes to how much math we're teaching in agricultural mechanics..."

Math Credit for Agriculture? Dare We Go Here?

Edwards and Young caution teachers when it comes to considering whether or not agriculture courses should receive math credit. "We have to be very careful when it comes to embedded credit," Edwards says.

"It's one thing to teach lessons that support selected math concepts and principles where they naturally occur in our primary subject matter. It's another thing entirely to push for a math credit. **To truly qualify for a math credit, a course needs to cover all the appropriate math standards for the credit, not just those that support the agriculture coursework.** It's a slippery slope that I believe we should avoid."

Taking the Next Step

If you're interested in enhancing the math concepts in your curriculum, contact your state staff and ask what inservice opportunities might be available in your area. You might also want to contact a teacher educator in your area and inquire about additional training opportunities. For information on what the next steps are for this study and how it can impact your state and program, read the 2007 abstracts at www.nccte.org. Click on the "Math in CTE: Research to Practice" link.

"The math teachers helped the agriculture teachers increase the rigor of their courses, and the agriculture teachers helped the math teachers add relevance to their courses."

Process is Key – 7 Steps to True Student Understanding

Dr. M. Craig Edwards, an associate professor at Oklahoma State University who also directed the study, emphasizes the importance of the process. "We strongly feel that the significant results demonstrated by this study are due to the collaborative process and ongoing, sustained professional development."

The teachers who participated in the study received five days of initial training over the summer, during which they reviewed their curricula with their partnered math teachers, identified the math concepts that were already present in the lessons, chose lessons in which to enhance the embedded math concepts, then developed the enhanced lessons. The group came back together for approximately two-and-a-half days of training in the fall and another two-and-a-half days in the spring.

"It is this kind of rigorous training that meets the requirements set forth in Perkins funding and that results in improved student achievement as it relates to the core curriculum," Edwards says.

Here's an example of how a lesson is modified through this process. Consider a lesson on constructing a hog facility foundation. First, you'd teach the students how to calculate area and perimeter in the context of the hog facility. The next step is applying the same math concepts to a related context, such as calculating the area of a field to determine the amount of seed you'd need.

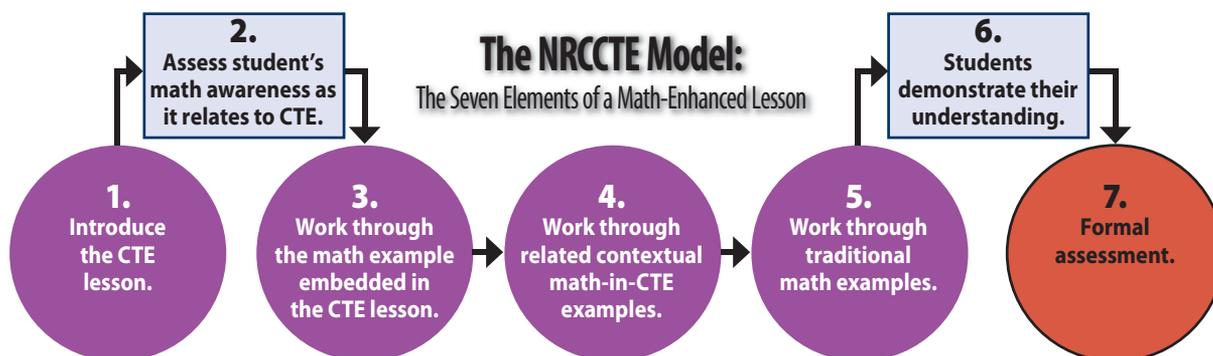
Once the students can apply the math principal to the field-area problem, you'd present the same principal using a traditional, abstract math approach and help them connect the material to their math class. To complete the process, you'd return to the original context and have the students calculate area in a problem similar to the original regarding constructing a foundation.

Edwards also stresses that this approach did not include team teaching. Rather, the math and agriculture teachers worked collaboratively to develop the lessons.

The agriculture teacher would teach the lessons, then meet with the math teacher to review the results and discuss possible improvements. "The collaboration with our math counterparts was partially about content and partially about morale," Edwards says. "The teams of teachers really supported one another."

Young reports that after the study was completed, many of the teachers continued meeting with their math colleagues. They had developed relationships that were mutually beneficial.

Edwards reflects on the larger point illuminated by the study. "We've proven that we can effectively help raise our students' math scores through this process. If agricultural education's collective future is to include integrating more academic content, and I believe it is, then we need to help our teachers develop those skills. That also likely means we'll need to reconfigure our pre-service requirements."



Source: *Improving the math skills of high school CTE students: Findings from an experimental study of math-enhanced CTE curricula*, by J.R. Stone, III, C.J. Alfeld, D. Pearson, M. Lewis and S. Jensen (2005). St. Paul, MN: The National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, University of Minnesota.

Building a Well-trained Workforce

as with most career and technical education areas, agricultural education has developed strong relationships with the industry it serves. To maintain these relationships and remain a viable part of the public school system, the profession must continually seek industry input and update programs to meet employer needs.

Basic Skills Required

"Incorporating reading, math and science standards into core agricultural content is crucial for the preparation of young people entering today's dynamic workforce," says Doug DeVries, the senior vice president, Agricultural Marketing - North America, Australia & Asia for Deere & Company and the 2006 National FFA Foundation Sponsors' Board chairman. "All industries are searching for employees that can understand problems, develop solutions and communicate the results in a meaningful way. Learning these basic skills gives young people the capacity to meet the challenges of a changing business environment and to provide real leadership in and out of the classroom."

Deere & Company is one of many companies that work with agriculture educators to develop solid educational programming designed to meet employer needs. At the post-secondary level, the company works with several colleges to offer the John Deere Ag Tech training program, one of which is located at Garden City Community College in Kansas.

Need to Read

Kent Kolbeck coordinates the GCCC training program in Kansas and is also one of the instructors. "The John Deere Ag Tech program exists to create skilled technicians for employment in the agricultural equipment business," Kolbeck says. "For students to be successful in our program, strong reading skills are crucial. They must be able to find and apply technical information, and they must be able to sort out what's pertinent and what isn't. The best technicians are going to be the students who can gather the best

information before they begin attempting to diagnose the problem."

Math a Must

Next on Kolbeck's list are math skills. "I've found that students who come to us with strong math skills generally can develop good diagnostic skills," Kolbeck explains. "The diagnostic process is very linear, which is how math works. I find these students tend to have a very methodical approach, which is a must in diagnostic work." Kolbeck adds measuring and being able to calculate specifications to the list of important math skills his students need before they arrive at GCCC.



"Incorporating reading, math and science standards into core agricultural content is crucial for the preparation of young people entering today's dynamic workforce."

The third academic area Kolbeck stresses is physics. "A good physics background makes hydraulics and powertrains much easier to understand," he says. "My students need to be able to apply the concepts of physics to the equipment they work on. And, they must be able to see a system as a system and be able to understand how it works accurately."

As our world becomes more technologically complex, all students need higher-level skills than in the past. In his book "The World is Flat," author Thomas Friedman looks to history and points out that it wasn't that many decades ago when one could earn a decent living with just a primary education. As technology developed and mechanization expanded, earning a secondary education became important. In looking to the future, Friedman projects that most people will require a post-secondary, or tertiary, education to remain viable in the job market.

When addressing Deere & Company's 2007 annual shareholders meeting, Robert Lane focused on the importance of the human resource. "Talent is the high-octane fuel that will ensure Deere's ability to meet its goals, rise to future challenges, and keep our company going strong as



it approaches its third century, only 30 years away," Lane said. "Talent - talent that works together - is the ultimate competitive advantage."

It is our job as secondary agriculture instructors to ensure this needed talent is academically prepared when students leave our classrooms.

Enhancing Reading Skills through Agriculture

most agriculture teachers see their job as teaching agriculture, not reading.

However, a growing number of teachers are beginning to see the merits of increasing the emphasis on reading in their agriculture courses and encouraging their peers to change their paradigms.

Reading Skills Critical

“A recent research report indicates that 27 percent of high school seniors in the United States read below the basic level, meaning that they cannot retrieve information from a document,” says Dr. Travis Park, assistant professor at Cornell University’s Department of Education. “It hit me that if a student is functionally illiterate in agriculture, it could be expensive and dangerous. If we ask them to read a chemical label or an engine manual and they can’t understand it, the resulting errors might lead to unnecessary expenses or even worse, physical harm.”

Parks continues, “We traditionally expect reading skills to be taught in language arts courses, not agriculture. However, think about it this way: If students aren’t able to read and understand Shakespeare, they might fail a test. In agriculture, the stakes are much higher. Students need a higher degree of literacy because they not only need to be able to read information, but also apply it in a wide variety of situations to produce a livelihood. They have to be able to pull all the pieces together in a meaningful way. These are skills that are essential for career success.”

Cory Epler teaches agriculture at Arkansas City High School in Kansas and is involved in his school’s Literacy First program. “When you examine what we teach and what we expect our students to be able to do, you’ll find that we rely heavily on

technical reading skills. Reading labels, blueprints and other items are critical to real-world success for our students.”

When Epler discusses the topic with other agriculture teachers, he often asks them if they’ve ever used a textbook assignment as punishment, e.g. pulling a student out of an agricultural mechanics lab and assigning questions from a book. He finds that most of them have, and he discourages the practice.

“We need to use textbooks as the tools they are; we need to find ways to engage students in the text,” Epler says. “It’s not about reading the chapter and answering the questions at the end.”

Engaging Students

Epler uses graphic organizers to help students learn and understand new terms. He posts student work on a “word wall” and features the terms for each unit. Epler also uses a summarizing strategy.

“I created a bulletin board and used the ‘five W’s plus H’ (who, what, when, where, why and how) to summarize the FFA Creed,” Epler explains. “That simple example helped my students understand how to summarize information. That leads to higher order thinking skills. They can compare and contrast; they can analyze the information. For me, it all starts with the teacher deciding this is important for students. Because of this process, we’ve seen a greater level of engagement with the material and better test scores in agriculture and in other courses.”

Epler says it all really stems from his team’s quest to be a part of the solution and help improve student test scores. “I believe that agricultural education must continue to integrate academic content and be able to prove to administrators that it contributes ‘five W’s plus H’ to overall student success.”



Tips to Try

Park and Epler offer the following tips for enhancing the level of reading in agriculture courses:

- Be aware of the authentic literacy practices you are already using. For example, you may have students read a Briggs & Stratton engine manual as part of a small engines course.
- Be aware of why you’re asking students to read and what you expect them to discover. Are they learning to tune an engine? Are they preparing for an Agricultural Issues CDE? As part of the assignment, you need to establish the purpose for reading and activate any background knowledge they might have on the subject.
- Learn a few strategies for encouraging reading and incorporate them in your classes. Examples include graphic organizers and summarizing.
- The culture a teacher creates in the classroom is important. If the teacher acts like reading is important, the students will pick up on that. The reciprocal is also true.

“It hit me that if a student is functionally illiterate in agriculture, it could be expensive and dangerous. If we ask them to read a chemical label or an engine manual and they can’t understand it, the resulting errors might lead to unnecessary expenses or even worse, physical harm.”

Taking a Hard Look at Science

When Penns Grove High School in New Jersey started its agriculture program in 1993, it offered four courses, and they all counted as a science credit toward graduation. Beginning next year, all incoming freshman will be required to take one of two science classes—general science or introduction to agricultural science—to meet their science requirement.

Analyze Course Content

Joel Rudderow, who teaches agriculture at Penns Grove, encourages teachers who are seeking science credit for their courses to evaluate what they're already teaching, both for content and for what the course counts for credit-wise. "If you're going for a science credit, your course must be aligned with the science standards. If you're going for a practical arts credit, you'll need to align your courses with those standards," he advises.

For those who are seeking science credit, Rudderow says, "Get a copy of your state's science standards and compare them with

will face outside of your classroom, or you won't be successful."

The next step is to determine what additional science concepts you'd need to teach to meet the standards that are related to agriculture. "You have to determine what you can keep and what needs to be eliminated to add the science concepts you need to have," Rudderow says. "You have to make hard choices sometimes. There have been some instances where if I wanted to keep the science credit, I had to eliminate more career-oriented units. For example, in my horticulture class, I eliminated a unit on floral design so that I could add more environmental concepts to meet the standards."

Compare the Terminology

In addition to meeting the science standards, Rudderow says it is critical that you use the same terminology as your science counterparts so that students aren't confused by the overlap. "In our introductory class, I teach a unit on agriculture and the environment," he explains. "I had always taught that water seeping through the soil is called 'percolation,' but the science teachers term the process 'infiltration.' If the teachers don't use the same terms, or at least define both and connect the two, then the students can become understandably confused."

Don't Reinvent the Wheel

As a veteran of the curricula revision process, Rudderow advocates reviewing existing curricula before trying to create everything on your own. "Contact other teachers in your state or in other states that have similar science standards and see what they're teaching," he suggests. You can find Rudderow's materials at www.pennsgrove.k12.nj.us (click on "District Curriculum," then "Science Curriculum").

Be Proactive

Lastly, Rudderow says you must be proactive and communicate what you're teaching to your administrators. "You constantly need to reinforce what you're teaching and providing ideas regarding what might be added or what could be easily incorporated," he says. "Don't forget the things you're teaching that don't meet a science standard. We teach a lot of things that meet standards in other areas, like math and social studies. When I teach parliamentary procedure, I'm meeting a social studies content standard."

At the end of the day, Rudderow indicates the line between academic and non-academic courses is becoming blurred. "Students need to know this stuff. Wherever they can learn it best is where they need to get it. Agriculture has contained academic information since its inception. You can be a career-based program and include academic content—the two are not mutually exclusive. I learned more physics in my ag mechanics class than anywhere else. I found it interesting because I could see how and where it was applied."

Rudderow continues, "We have a huge advantage over our academic counterparts because we can grab students' interests and make the academic concepts applicable. We do that better than anyone else. And, because our students are interested, we can make the content stick."



Bacteria lab



Corn genetics lab

the concepts you're already teaching to determine which of your courses might meet the standards. As you go through this exercise, you need to ask yourself what will help your students meet the standards and pass their science tests. You must show that you're helping prepare your students for the tests they

ENGAGE

A Newsletter for Chapter Officers



Your End...Their Beginning

By Mark Jewell

Your term as a chapter officer is winding down. The time has flown by, and it will soon be time to pass the torch on to the next lucky chap who will hold your office. As you prepare to end your term, you're presented with two choices:

1. Give 100% right up until the last day, or
2. Drop your unfinished work on your successor.

Which will it be? Great officers are those who help develop future leaders for success in coming years.

Here are *four steps* toward making that happen in your FFA chapter.

- 1 **Energize!** Get your fellow members fired up about FFA by helping them get involved with something they can enjoy. Imagine your pride as you watch them grow and succeed!
- 2 **Synergize!** Build upon the friendships you have in your chapter. Synergy is what happens when various components work together for positive action. Hold a pizza party, movie night or maybe even a barn dance. Growing friendships can help your chapter members work more closely together.
- 3 **Mobilize!** What can you change about your chapter to make it better? Figure out what that is, and make a plan for positive change. Motivate a committee to help! Younger members will thank you for years to come.
- 4 **Enterprise!** When you bring all the steps together, you've just planted the seed to grow your chapter long after you hang up that FFA jacket. Watch the enterprise you know and love—your FFA chapter—grow and continue to prosper. Remember, the true measure of an officer is the success of those who come after them.

Mark Jewell lives in Minneapolis, MN, and is the Recruiter/Career Counselor at the Agricultural and Food Sciences Academy. He enjoys speaking to and working with young people! Mark is always available at mark.j.jewell@gmail.com.



In this Issue

- Recruiting
- Effective Teams
- Banquet Fever!
- The Importance of Community



RECRUITING

By Alyson Johnson, WLC & ALD Presenter

Effective TEAMS

Papers! Get your papers! Papers...anybody?

We all know the scene — it's a cold, rainy, lonely street, and there's the paperboy on the corner trying to sell his papers. But it is to no avail; no matter how hard he tries or how loud he yells, no one seems to want his papers.

Have you ever had this same feeling when trying to recruit new FFA members? Recruiting new members for your chapter is a vital way for you to serve your chapter by focusing on the future. But stellar recruitment ideas don't always come easy. Well, don't sweat it! We've packed in new ideas to keep you from being left out in the cold with the paperboy.

Make your FFA chapter look appealing! Take a hard look at your chapter and decide if it is a club people would want to join. Are your current members having fun? Is your club involved and active? Nobody wants to join a club that looks boring and unappealing...so jazz it up!

Open one of your chapter meetings to everyone. Let non-members come experience what they are missing out on. This is also a great time to spice up your meetings and make them more exciting by including giveaways and having snacks for members.

Go to the agriculture classes your advisor teaches and try to recruit those students. Those kids are like sitting ducks, waiting to be recruited by you!

Start a community service project to interest people who might not typically join FFA. Service projects can be almost anything ranging from construction to after school tutoring; the possibilities are endless! But even more, service projects need lots of willing volunteers. This can be a chance to involve new people.

The bottom line is that building future membership is important for your chapter and a great way for you to leave your chapter better than it was when you were elected. So gather your officer team, have a creative brainstorming session, and figure out how you're going to make sure that when recruitment starts, new members are lining up at the door to grab a paper and see what you've got to offer!



By Dane White,
Past National FFA Officer

7 Ways to... Build Effective Teams

- 1 Every other week, do a "get to know you" activity.
- 2 Talk it out! With every conflict, get the whole group together and talk through it.
- 3 Be specific about the tasks each person is to complete, so no confusion ensues.
- 4 Have monthly officer meetings that include dinner at someone's house.
- 5 Take a retreat in the summer where you plan the year and do some teambuilding activities.
- 6 Practice together! For every meeting, banquet and function, get together and practice beforehand.
- 7 Spend time outside of FFA together.

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THINGS TO TRY

BANQUET FEVER!



By Dane White, Past National FFA Officer

Seven Tips for a...

Rockstar Slideshow

1. Keep the slideshow to a max of 10 minutes. People will get bored otherwise.
2. Give each picture three seconds on the screen.
3. Set it to fun music that reinforces the theme.
4. Have a slideshow going while people are arriving/eating if you have lots of pictures.
5. Use pictures with five to seven people, max. More than that becomes blurry and confusing.
6. Have photos of students working in classes. This impresses school officials and industry leaders.
7. Have the occasional "asleep in the van" or "funny face" picture to keep things light.

Want 50 FFA Bucks?

Submit your coolest ideas for making chapter meetings exciting and action-packed. Those entries published each month will win \$50 for their FFA chapter to spend at www.ffaunlimited.org! Submissions should be emailed to rdurham@ffa.org.

Try This Out!

- **Allow students to present all of the awards.**
Put the winners' names in marked envelopes, tape the names on plaques and certificates, and then let students have the control.
- **Show a slideshow** highlighting the winners' activities while they are accepting their awards. Dedicate an officer or member to running it the whole time.
- **Create a binder** with all of your evening's scripts and PRACTICE them. Have a deadline for scripts several days before the banquet and then go over them, including mock award presentations, honorary member ceremony and officer installation.
- **Have classes make the table and room decorations** and then auction them off.
- **Play music** while people are arriving and eating. It helps keep the mood festive.
- **Hold the eating and awards in two locations.**
After everyone chows down in the cafeteria, guide them to the auditorium where the formal ceremonies begin. People are more likely to stay engaged and stick around.
- **Send an invitation to the parents**, indicating their child will be receiving an award. Their attendance is likely when they know their student will be in the spotlight.
- **Have a WLC scholarship program** where a deserving student gets a portion of his or her expenses to the Washington Leadership Conference paid. Announce this at the banquet.

10 Jammin' Banquet Songs

1. *Me and My Gang* – Rascal Flatts
2. *With a Little Help From My Friends* – Joe Cocker
3. *Waiting on the World to Change* – John Mayer
4. *Chasing Cars* – Snow Patrol
5. *See the Light* – True Vibe
6. *Feels Just Like it Should* – Pat Green
7. *Life is a Highway* – Chris Ledoux or Rascal Flatts
8. *Street Corner Symphony* – Rob Thomas
9. *Suddenly I See* – KT Tunstall
10. *Back Where I Come From* – Kenny Chesney

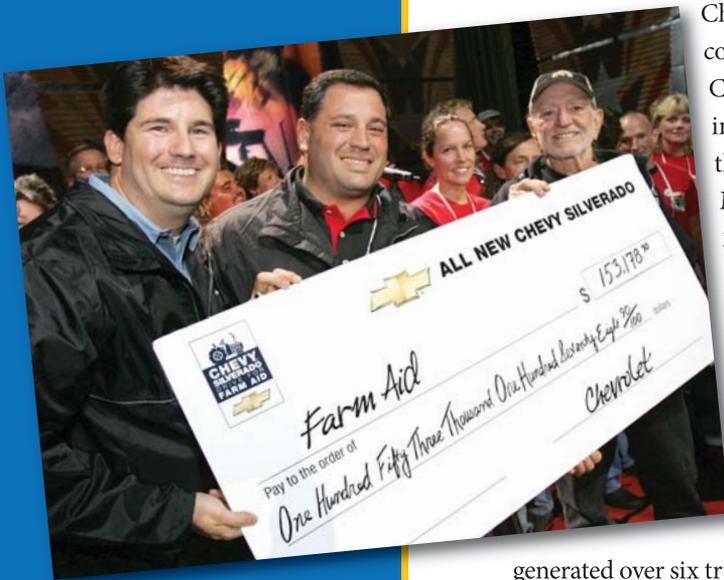


"...By lending our support to Farm Aid, we're helping to preserve family farm-centered agriculture in America."

Chevrolet

The Importance of *Community*

Chevrolet employees have a deep passion for their brand. As the largest division within General Motors, it's hard not to. It is this passion that has made Chevrolet the number one selling automotive brand in America. Chevrolet strives to provide expressive design, spirited performance and great value in all the vehicles they produce. But it goes beyond producing, marketing and selling vehicles that causes the Chevrolet team to be so proud...



John Roth, Chevrolet Advertising Manager, presents Farm Aid founder, Willie Nelson, with a check for \$153,178.90 to support the American farms and American agriculture. Photo by Eric Miller.

Chevrolet is deeply rooted into so many communities, and one such community is the American farmer. In late September of 2006, Chevrolet joined forces with Farm Aid to raise awareness of the importance of the American farm. How Chevrolet accomplished this was a sight to see. Using their relationships with the Country Music Association, Chevrolet introduced their newest vehicle, the 2007 Chevy Silverado, to many key cities. Starting in Dallas, Texas, Chevrolet offered a free concert featuring Montgomery Gentry during the State Fair of Texas. From there, a caravan of Chevy Silverados traveled over 2,800 miles in just four days, stopping along the way in Nashville, Indianapolis and Pittsburgh. At each stop, Chevrolet offered free country music concerts in efforts to raise funds and support for the Farm Aid cause.

In Pittsburgh alone, the Chevy Silverado Drive for Farm Aid generated over six truckloads of non-perishable food items and thousands of dollars for American farms. General Manager of Chevrolet, Ed Peper, had this to say about their commitment to serving the community: "The Silverado, family farms and country music share deep, strong roots in America, and we want to celebrate that legacy. By lending our support to Farm Aid, we're helping to preserve family farm-centered agriculture in America."

In today's world, it is important that we all give back to the local communities we serve. Whether a large corporation, a small family or a single individual, it is crucial to serve and support the ones around us. The entire team at Chevrolet would like to challenge you to do more within your community. A little service can go a long way.



2007 Chevy Silverado

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.



Sponsored by Chevrolet as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.



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Local Program Success

Making Learning Relevant

for years, agriculture teachers have implemented techniques that make learning relevant. By using the three-circle model of agricultural education, teachers have, and will continue, to use instruction, experiential learning and leadership development to provide a total educational experience for their students.

Our students' abilities to apply what they are learning to real-life situations increases retention and reinforces that what they are learning is important.

Making learning relevant and incorporating science, math and social studies standards to your curriculum does many things for you, your students and the program. For students, it takes what they are learning in their other classes and emphasizes how this information can be applied to their lives. In turn, students use their newly acquired skills in everyday situations, thus increasing their productivity.

In that respect, making content relevant increases your students' abilities to compete in an ever-changing world of new technology and career choices. As a teacher, you will see benefits in sharing resources and lessons with other teachers in your school and district. The increased awareness of your ability to incorporate academic standards into your curriculum will boost your value as an educator in the eyes of administrators and other teachers on staff.

All these things will reflect positively on your program, and great things should start to happen. Examples of how programs can benefit include

- an increase in the dollars committed by your administration (because they know you are making a positive difference in student success).

- an increase in enrollment as counselors, administrators and other students see the value in the program and influence more students to take classes and enter the program.
- awards, recognition and media attention for the program will expand as you make learning real and students show educational improvement and career success.

All of these are great reasons for incorporating or focusing lessons on academic standards, but, ultimately as a teacher, you are doing it for the right reasons—for the students and their education.

Proven practices in getting started include

- Work with science, math and social studies teachers in your school; discuss what you teach and how what they are teaching might be incorporated or reinforced.
- Obtain a copy of the national standards in each content area to better understand what they include. After you have an understanding of the standards, you will be prepared to identify ways to better incorporate them in your existing curriculum.
- Work with your state supervisor for agricultural education or teacher educators within your state to identify new curriculum or resources that are available to assist you.
- Identify professional growth opportunities that will help you

By Tony Small,
Education
Division Director
National FFA
Organization



develop new methods and lessons in these areas. State supervisors, teacher educators, NAAE representatives and Local Program Success staff can share ideas and information. Check the *FFA Advisors Making a Difference* Teacher Resources page.

As the National Council for Agricultural Education and state Team Ag Ed representatives work to achieve the 10 X 15 goal for agricultural education, they will focus on the following areas:

- Implementing the new National Program Standards for Agricultural Education
- Linking food, agriculture and natural resource content standards to national academic content standards
- Developing multiple agricultural education designs to include new markets for agricultural education programs. All designs will focus on keeping program and content standards consistent using all three components of the agricultural education model.

Keep a close eye on this publication, your NAAE professional publications and The Council web pages for updates on resources available to assist you in the integration process. There are many great reasons to start now, and the only person who can make it happen in your program is you!



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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.

Saying Thanks

to Those Who Provide FFA Award and Recognition Programs

We all like to receive words of thanks; it's just human nature. One of the most important parts of keeping people involved in your local program is thanking them for their contributions of time, effort and funding. This rule also holds true on the state and national levels.

The National FFA Organization is fortunate to have sponsors who are willing to contribute millions of dollars annually to support FFA programs. One of the reasons FFA has consistently been able to raise the level of contributions it receives annually is because each year sponsors receive notes of gratitude written by accomplished young people from across the country.

As the chapter banquet season hits full stride, students are being recognized for their accomplishments in a wide range of areas. Don't forget to ask each of your chapter winners to write a brief note of thanks to the company or individuals responsible for funding their awards. To assist with this process, all of the national career development event and proficiency award sponsor names follow (in alphabetical order by award/event area). **For a complete list of foundation sponsors and their contact information, log on to MyFFA and look for the "Foundation Sponsors" link.**

Career Development Events

Agricultural Communications

- DTN

Agricultural Issues

- Elanco Animal Health, A Division of Eli Lilly and Company

Agricultural Mechanics

- Firestone Agricultural Tire Company

Agricultural Sales

- Monsanto

Creed Speaking

- CHS Foundation

Dairy Cattle Evaluation

- WestfaliaSurge Inc.

Dairy Foods

- Dairy Farmers of America Inc.

Environmental and Natural Resources

- Smithfield Foods
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Extemporaneous Public Speaking

- American Farm Bureau Federation

Farm Business Management

- John Deere

Floriculture

- Ball Horticultural Company

Horse Evaluation

- Dodge Trucks
- KENT Feeds Inc.

Job Interview

- Tractor Supply Company

Livestock Evaluation

- Alpharma Animal Health Division
- Merial

Marketing Plan

- DeBruce Grain
- DuPont Company
- USDA Rural Development

Meats Evaluation and Technology

- Kraft Foods Inc. - Oscar Mayer Division
- USDA Rural Development

Nursery/Landscape

- Arysta LifeScience North America Corporation
- Kubota Tractor Corporation
- Stihl Inc.

Prepared Public Speaking

- Monsanto
- Vector Marketing - Cutco Cutlery

Proficiency Awards

Agricultural Education

- The James F. Lincoln Arc Welding Foundation
- Lincoln Electric Company

Agricultural Mechanics Design and Fabrication

- Carry-on Trailer Corporation
- Dodge Trucks

Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance Entrepreneurship and Placement

- Hobart Welders
- Tractor Supply Company

Agricultural Processing

- Archer Daniels Midland Company
- CHS Foundation

Agricultural Sales Placement

- Vigortone Ag Products

Beef Production Entrepreneurship

- Nasco Division-Nasco International Inc.

Dairy Production Placement

- Monsanto

Diversified Agricultural Production

- Delta Consolidated - A Danaher Company

Diversified Crop Production Entrepreneurship

- CHS Foundation

Diversified Crop Production Placement

- National Crop Insurance Services

Diversified Horticulture Entrepreneurship

- Nationwide Foundation

Diversified Livestock Entrepreneurship

- Tractor Supply Company

Diversified Livestock Placement

- Behlen Mfg. Co.

Emerging Agricultural Technology

- Chevrolet

Equine Science Entrepreneurship

- Keystone Steel & Wire - Red Brand
- Land O' Lakes Feed/Purina Mills



2007 EARTH DAY CHALLENGE!



Launch a reforestation or conservation project in your community and engage local volunteers.

\$3,000 GRANT:
BEST CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

\$7,000 GRANT: BEST IMPACT

MORE INFO ON [WWW.FFA.ORG](http://www.ffa.org)



FOR MORE INFORMATION: Joe Martinez, 317-802-4316 jmartinez@ffa.org www.ffa.org

IT'S BACK!

TELL YOUR ADVISOR THAT YOUR CHAPTER WANTS TO BE A PART OF THE CHALLENGE.



Visit the 1MHC web page on www.ffa.org for more information on how you can submit your service projects. You can even download a worksheet that will help compile hours for your chapter!

Left: 2006 Living to Serve Award: Ponchatoula High School FFA in Ponchatoula, LA

**WIN CASH AWARDS FOR YOUR CHAPTER
AND A CHANCE TO BE FEATURED ON FFA TODAY!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Joe Martinez 317-802-4316 jmartinez@ffa.org www.ffa.org

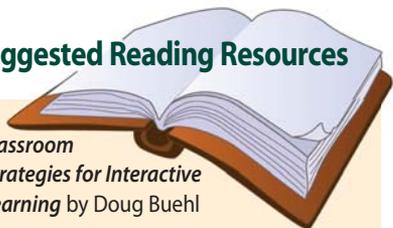
TeacherResources

Looking for a place to begin integrating academics into your curriculum? Below are references and resources suggested by teachers highlighted in this issue.

Math Resources

Thompson Delmar Learning offers a textbook entitled *Mathematical Applications in Agriculture*. It includes informative chapters on mathematical operations and measurements as well as 17 additional chapters on math applications in the contextual areas of agricultural education. Take a closer look at www.delmarlearning.com/browse_product_detail.aspx?catid=12346&isbn=140183549X

Suggested Reading Resources



- **Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning** by Doug Buehl
 - **Building Reading Comprehension Habits in Grades 6-12** by Jeff Zwierz
- Both of the above books can be found at the International Reading Society at www.reading.org
- Literacy First online: www.literacyfirst.com
 - Many online resources can be found by typing key words into a search engine, like Google; start by looking here at these free examples: www.glencoe.com/sec/teaching-today/tiparchive.phtml/7#freedownloads
 - Ask an English teacher for examples of graphic organizers and summarizing tools

Science Resources

If you're thinking about stepping up your curriculum's science content, the first place to look might be the National Science Education Standards. You can view them on the National Science Teachers Association webpage at www.nsta.org/standards. After reviewing the standards, take time to go to the teacher grab bag site (bottom right corner of page). This link takes you to a plethora of science resources that can assist you in your integration efforts.

AgrowKnowledge provides links to teacher workshops, online courses, a vast listing of

online resources and much more. Go to <http://www.agrowknow.org/> and click on the educator corner link.

The museum of science art and perception has a vast website of science and math applications. Go to www.exploratorium.edu and click on the educate link, then start exploring.

Here are a few examples of what you will find in the Exploratorium files:

- Cow eye dissection: www.exploratorium.edu/learning_studio/cow_eye/index.html
- Sheep brain dissection: www.exploratorium.edu/memory/braindissection/
- Hands-on activities in food science, etc.: www.exploratorium.edu/explore/hands-on.html

Want more dissections?

Look here:

- Subscription site for online dissections: www.froguts.com
- Online dissections found at http://biology.about.com/od/onlinedissections/Online_Dissections.htm

A good source of online lab activities tied to biotechnology can be found on the University of Arizona Biotechnology Project site at <http://biotech.biology.arizona.edu/labs/Labs.html>. There are 27 different genetics and biotech lab activities with student and teacher materials in multiple formats.

Additional biotechnology information from Iowa State University can be found at http://www.biotech.iastate.edu/biotech_info_series/

Animated information on genetics and DNA can be viewed at DNA from the Beginning, <http://www.dnaftb.org/dnaftb/>. This site contains 14 multi-media lessons on each of these three genetic topics: classic genetics, molecule of genetics, and genetic organization and control.

Even more animated lessons on genetics are available from the DNA Learning Center at <http://www.dnalc.org/ddnalc/resources/pcr.html>.

After your students have all the genetics content mastered, have them put it to use in the virtual DNA Fingerprinting Laboratory Game at <http://ppge.ucdavis.edu/Software/VDNA/vdna.cfm>. Here, students are placed in a virtual laboratory where they must utilize molecular biology techniques to solve a forensic mystery.

Agriculture Sales and Marketing



Teachers with classes in agriculture sales may want to explore these sites designed to better educate students on advertising strategy and concepts:

- www.floridatechnet.org/GED/LessonPlans/Interdisciplinary/InterLesson12.pdf
- http://inventors.about.com/od/lessonplans/a/creativity_5.htm
- www.corsinet.com/braincandy/slogans.html
- www.econedlink.org/lessons/print.cfm?lesson=EM645&page=teacher
- www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/overheads/alcohol/brands_symbols.cfm

Tractor and Agriculture Safety Materials

For those who teach tractor and agriculture safety courses, you might want to explore the materials at Florida Extension's "flagsafe" website. This site has multimedia presentations, information on agriculture safety for children, lesson materials for agriculture safety courses and much more! Go to www.flagsafe.ufl.edu/ and click on "More Tractor Safety Resources."

Easy Links Online

Are you getting tired of trying to type a monstrous URL into your computer? Go the easy route! All the above links can be found "live" on the *FFA Advisors Making a Difference* archive web page at http://www.ffa.org/media/html/med_pub_index.htm. Type this in once then save it to your bookmarks, and you'll never again have to type another web address from the Teacher Resources page!



FFA TODAY!



Telling your stories.

Third Monday of each month on RFD-TV

www.ffa.org



RFD-TV is on **DISH Network** (channel 9409)
DIRECTV (channel 379 with the Multi-Sat dish)
Mediacom cable and **NCTC** cable systems.

1 Million Hour Challenge

Advisors, don't forget about the 1 Million Hour Challenge! Log your chapter's service hours, and you could win a special cash award to start another civic engagement project. Check out the Educators Workroom on ffa.org and click through to the 1MHC page. Download the 1MHC handbook and worksheets for your students to use.



2007 National FFA Convention Housing

The 2007 National FFA Convention housing list of hotels and their corresponding rates is available online. To view the hotel listings and access the housing form, please login to myFFA and click on the 2007 Housing link. This can be found on the myFFA menu.

Reserving rooms for other chapters? If you are reserving rooms for other chapters, and each chapter will be pre-registering for convention on their own, please make sure you indicate on the chapter housing form the chapters and the number of rooms allotted to each chapter. We want to make sure each chapter gets the pre-convention registration discount for utilizing the National FFA Housing block.

If you have any questions, please contact Ellen Williams at 317-802-4269 or ewilliams@ffa.org.

Delaware Subscribes to LifeKnowledge Online for all State Chapters

Delaware has become the first state to subscribe to the new LifeKnowledge

Online service for all of the state's high school programs. Additionally, subscriptions were obtained for the University of Delaware and Delaware State University.

Be a Part of the New FFA Merchandising Center!

The new merchandising facility will open this summer and will house the FFA Merchandise Operations Division, which includes the merchandising, licensing and customer and distribution services departments.

There will be two conference rooms in the new 36,000-square-foot facility and FFA wants your help naming them! Brainstorm with your chapter on what you think the names should be! Send your suggested name, along with a 500-word essay on why this name would be a good fit for the conference rooms and how it relates to agriculture to Kristy Meyer, National FFA Organization, 6060 FFA Drive, PO Box 68960, Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960, or e-mail it to kmeyer@ffa.org by Friday, April 27.

The new names will be announced on the May *FFA Today!* broadcast, so start thinking, brainstorming and writing...and you can put your personal touch on the new Merchandise Center!

Earth Day Challenge

Timberland PRO and the National FFA Organization are joining forces and launching the 2007 Earth Day Challenge.

FFA chapters will develop community service projects engaging many volunteers in service to their local community.

- Projects must meet service impact guidelines and take place in the month of April (preferably the week of April 16, or on Earth Day itself—April 22).
- Project applications must be submitted to Joe Martinez by Friday, May 4. (Learn more on page 12.)

Hotel Discounts for State Conventions

FFA advisors, please remember La Quinta hotels offer a special 15 percent discount for FFA members, advisors, families and supporters.

The national discount will come in handy for your state convention and other business or leisure travel.

Many state foundations also have this same program with La Quinta. Check with your state staff to see if one is available. It is easy to save money by following these simple steps:

- If you book directly with a La Quinta hotel or make your reservations by calling 1-800-531-5900, ask for the National FFA Organization discount.
- If you book online at www.lq.com, use the promotional code NAFFA or your state code.

Thank you for supporting the National FFA Organization through this affiliate program. Enjoy your travels!



Honoring Diversity Efforts

the National FFA Organization has been growing in its inclusiveness of students of all backgrounds, including ethnicity, gender, region and ability. This gradual growth is evidenced at chapter functions, local workshops, state conventions and the national FFA convention.

To celebrate its students and leaders who have performed exemplary roles in inclusive efforts, the H.O. Sargent Diversity Award program honors both FFA members and business/community leaders. In congruence with its original purpose in 1959, the award recognizes FFA members and adults who develop and/or actively support ways to reach underrepresented individuals or groups who have not been able to enjoy the full benefits of agricultural education and FFA activities.

Clarissa Yvette Parks, a member of the Coral Reef FFA chapter in Miami, Fla., was one of the 2006 student award national winners. Through her work with autistic students, Parks has grown to understand how to break down communication barriers between students with disabilities and members of their community. She also grew in her ability to challenge and overcome her personal strengths and weaknesses. She has helped students with autism to enter projects into the agriscience fair at the Miami Dade Youth Fair and Exposition Center. In addition to working with her fellow students, she also works with the Wounded Women of Excellence, an organization that helps build relationships between FFA members and teenage girls who are in a rehabilitation facility for exhibiting violent tendencies. Parks is the daughter of Angelique Meade Parks. Her FFA advisors are Nyree Washington and Dr. Wesley Welch.

Dr. David Coffey of Bowling Green, Ky., was honored as a national winner in the community and business leaders category. Upon his provost's insistence, Coffey delayed his retirement from Western Kentucky University to accept a position working with low income students, first-generation students, and students with disabilities. He quickly became an advocate for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, learning-disabled students and Hispanics in the community. Regarding the work, Coffey says, "The process is one of listening, maintaining confidentiality, setting timelines, advocating to higher levels and implementing changes."

The H.O. Sargent Diversity Award is sponsored by Monsanto as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

Editor's Note: The above individuals were unintentionally omitted from the Nov./Dec. 2006 issue. The editors apologize for the oversight.



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Look for
your next issue of *FFA*
Advisors Making a Difference
in April. It will feature stories about the
agricultural industry and technology,
as well as provide teaching resources
and FFA news.