



# Making a Difference

The Resource for Agriculture Educators



## Advisory Committees Help Your Program Succeed

"If you want something done right, you've got to do it yourself."

We've all uttered that phrase a million times. It might be after your kids "wash" the dishes, or your students "clean" the barn. If it's to be done the "right" way, then you have to carve extra time out of your busy day to do the task at hand.

But the truth is, you don't have to do everything yourself. Just having something done "right" doesn't mean it's always the "best" way to accomplish the job. Case in point - your agriculture mechanics program needs new welding masks. The right thing to do is to go to your administration and just ask for them. "Money's tight," they say. "Surely you can make do until next year." You shrug and leave with nothing. Money is money, and if it's not there, then it's not there, right?



## Advisory Committees Serve as Soundboard for Ag Ed Programs Read More Here!



## Advisory Committees: From the First Meeting to the Best Data and Beyond

So, you've formed an advisory committee-or at least are in the process of putting one together. Where do you go from here?

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## Advisory Committees Make Things Happen for Agriculture Programs

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of those animals year-round and step up to a larger leadership role with that facility, but to do that, the school felt we needed to find a place for the animals first. At my advisory committee meeting...[Read Story](#)

### Who Provides the Influence to Improve Your Program?

As I prepare this article, the national unemployment rate has reached 8.5 percent (higher in many states); the stock market has fluctuated in a 7,000-point range; and I actually feel good about paying \$2.39 a gallon for diesel. Because of this uncertainty, there are few extra resources available, causing many states to make cuts to educational funding. Have agricultural education programs positioned themselves to survive? [Read Story](#)

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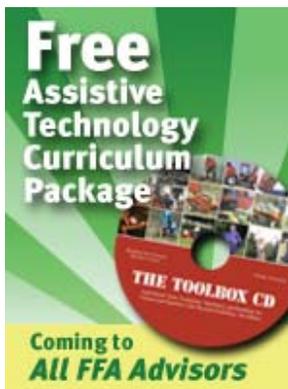


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### Advisory Committees Serve as Soundboard for Ag Ed Programs

By Michael Rubino

Trent Coates found out that having an advisory committee is not only a necessity—the Perkins Act requires that every program have one in order to qualify for federal funding—but it's also a luxury. When he started four years ago, the CTE teacher from Elko, Nev., discovered that fact wasn't a revelation so much as it was a relief.



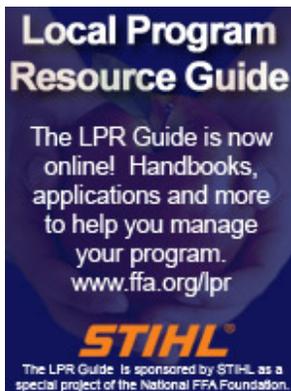
With about 250 students in the Elko program—or, as Coates puts it, “a million, it feels like”—he quickly realized getting overwhelmed by his duties looked like a distinct possibility. But, thanks to guidance from his advisory committee, Coates was able to assert control and avoid any looming disaster—so far.

“I’m still pretty new and so we haven’t had anything blow up on us yet, but I really lucked out,” he says. “When I came here, there was already a committee in place and things were running pretty smoothly.”



Peace of mind is just one of the benefits afforded by an advisory committee, recommended in the National Quality Program Standards for Secondary Agricultural Education as just one part of a successful program. Program advisors say in addition to help lessening their load, an outside committee lends credibility and visibility to their programs, acts as a sounding board, provides much-needed outside perspective, and—perhaps most importantly—gives students a connection to potential future employers.

“This job is a ton of work to do by yourself, and there are only so many hours in the day,” says Jared Hyatt, a teacher for 14 years, the last seven at Douglas High School in Minden, Nev. “If you want to get everything covered, you need to get help. I view my committee as a support system. They are there to help get more for the students and



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program. If they weren't around, less would ultimately get done."

Like the Elko committee—which, in addition to Coates, counsels two other teachers—most meet just a handful of times annually. Typically, those meetings occur at the beginning of the school year around the holiday break and during the spring. Time is spent setting goals and assisting in charting a course to achieve them. "We talk about the direction of our program, and they share their ideas and concerns," says Coates. "We talk about our fundraisers. We discuss what employers are looking for—who's hiring, who's not. It's like a sounding board." Advisors also say they keep informal contact with their committee members with periodic phone calls or by just catching up in the line at the grocery store.

In Coates' case, because he was new to the job, he found it especially helpful that some advisory committee members had long tenures, providing him with some much-appreciated institutional knowledge. "In a lot of cases," he said, "they already knew what worked—and what didn't." But he adds that it's not the committee's program to run. "That's my job," he says. "I see the committee as a sounding board."

Hyatt says the committee helps legitimize his program inside the school community and out. When taking an issue to the school administration or asking for additional funding, he says things always run more smoothly when a parent or member of the business community from the committee advocates on behalf of the program instead of himself or a student. "That's just the way it goes," says Hyatt. The same is true when the program needs a hand from outside the school. "My committee often knows people and resources that I wasn't aware of."

Douglas High School didn't have an active advisory committee when Hyatt arrived at the school, and his first step in creating one was to find people in the local community with common interests as well as parents and volunteers who had supported the program in the past. When Hyatt asked people to serve, most were receptive. "I think people just see it as another way they could help out."

Hyatt stocked his committee with business owners (one of his members owns a nursery) and trade workers from local weld shops. "I wanted this committee to be a representation of the town that we lived in, and that way you are supporting your taxpayers," he says. "Plus, I was trying to pick people that might be perspective employers. If a kid graduates, he should be able to get a job in the town he went to school in."

Coates, who has seven members on his committee in Elko, wants to soon add another member from a local community college that has an agricultural education program, hoping

to benefit those students looking to further their education upon high school graduation.

“Ultimately, what we’re doing is preparing students to be productive members of society,” Coates says. “We expect them to know these things.” But they don’t, and he says having an advisory committee takes the guesswork and mystery out of the workplace.”

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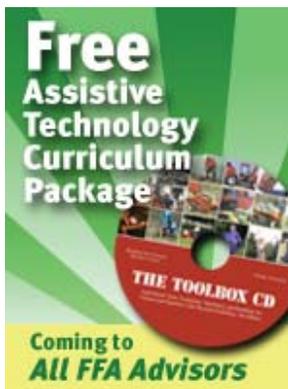
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### Advisory Committees: From the First Meeting to the Best Data and Beyond

By Beth DeHoff

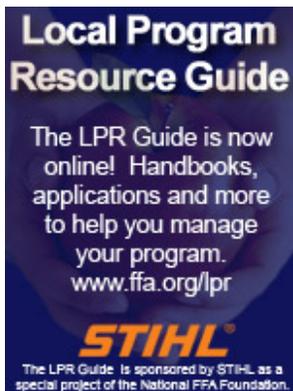
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Perhaps the best way to know what to do with your advisory committee is to see what the National Quality Program Standards has to say about it. Following are just a few of the standards related to advisory committees, and how two teachers have used their advisory committees to help improve and grow their programs.

#### The advisory committee meets regularly and maintains minutes of each meeting.

After you've cast your advisory committee roles, it's time to make some basic decisions, such as how often to meet and how to run the meetings. "We meet at least three times a year, but generally four to five times a year. We run our meetings as a legitimate business meeting," says Aaron Albisu, agriculture instructor at Spring Creek High School in Spring Creek, Nev., and advisor for the Silver Sage FFA Chapter. Albisu's advisory committee takes minutes and discusses the previous meeting's minutes at each gathering. They also cover what's gone on since the previous meeting, and they discuss "hot topics," he says. "Those might be issues our department is facing, events or big grants coming up, or consideration of program areas to grow or maintain," Albisu says. "Then we have ideas. Everyone talks about what they've heard, good or bad, about the FFA, the agriculture program or agriculture in general, and how we should address those things."

Carla Travis, agriculture instructor for Northeast Metro, a technical center in White Bear, Minn., serving 16 area high schools, has an advisory committee full of vets, vet techs,



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and small business owners—all very busy individuals. The group meets only twice a year, including one advisory committee breakfast, but they remain active year-round. “We do a lot of e-mails and conference calls with the members we need at the time,” Travis says.

### **The advisory committee assists with all aspects of program operations including an evaluation, promotion, planning, instruction and assessment of student learning.**

Travis takes advantage of her advisory committee in several ways. “They provide me with industry standards, what the employment market is, and they review my curriculum and let me know what the industry needs us to add or eliminate,” she says. “They also make recommendations for equipment and facility needs, and they serve as guest speakers and help with our events.”

Albisu uses his advisory committee as advocates when opinion leaders are needed. “We empower our advisory committee to be involved if there’s an issue,” he says. “If we feel a phone call is needed on behalf of the industry or area a committee member represents, they can do that to encourage more funds, more facilities, etc. We also have them all sign grant applications and anything we’re pushing as advisors. All those signatures show that they have involvement and support the idea.” Albisu’s advisory committee members also serve on other school and district FFA committees, expanding the chapter’s areas of influence.

Both Travis and Albisu use the advisory committee for high-level planning and promotion, but both also encourage members to get directly involved with student learning. “If my students need information, they can call on the advisory committee members. For example, if they want to know what it takes to be a vet tech, they can call one of our vet techs on the committee,” Travis says.

Albisu says his advisory committee members are highly involved with CDEs, serving as judges at practice events and state competitions, and they are always available at events and to help with transportation and other needs. “They’re always there to help, answer questions, put out fires, light some fires,” he says.

### **Information on local, state and national performance measures are collected for program improvement and enhanced student learning.**

Data collection can seem an overwhelming task, but the standards make it fairly simple. Nevada has adopted the AET, a new online record book, and Albisu uses that program to collect student data. “We track each kid’s contests, gender, proficiency test scores, projects, SAEs,

future plans, etc. Then our state supervisor collects data on all the students in the state and breaks it down by school, by student," he says. "We share all that data with the advisory committee, and they help us use it to justify the programs and positions. It helps with grant applications, and it helps maintain successful programs and fund programs that need support. With the data, we can actually show an administrator what's working and what needs more support and why." Travis also tracks student data, such as student scores and college choices.

**Information is collected from community partners relative to their expectations and current assessment of program quality and the success of students.**

**A formal annual program evaluation based on local performance information, state performance measures and input from community stakeholder groups is conducted.**

Albisu's committee has also been involved in assessing the agriculture program using the National Quality Program Standards tools. "They've been involved in the NQPS and have gone through the assessment of our needs, weakness and strengths," he says. "They make suggestions as to how we could improve."

Travis says her advisory committee helps the program with a four-part assessment process:

1. Assess program elements using the Standards
2. Select areas to target for achievement (July)
3. Evaluate progress (March)
4. Celebrate results (and begin again)

Minnesota was one of the first 10 states to pilot the Standards, and one role of the advisory committee was to help them use the Standards for evaluation. The evaluation involved input from the advisory committee, the school board, the principal, students, the director and state representatives. "I definitely think the assessment and evaluation help the agriculture program," Travis says. "We've found when you have the Standards, you see what you're needing to do and what you're already doing well. It's all there in front of you. And it helps us put a positive spin on us, to highlight what we're doing and how it helps students grow."

Clearly, your advisory committee can take a lead role in supporting your program and its students. Use the NQPS to guide you, and you'll have advisory committee members who help you see your program and community clearly and who become your best advocates as you strive to create a program that serves the needs of students, school and community.

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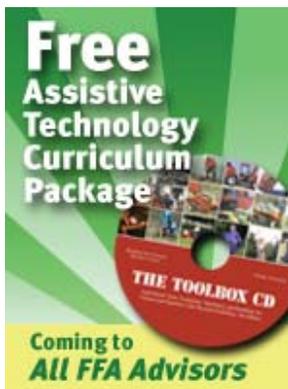
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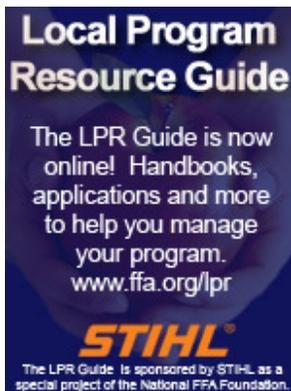
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Housing animals. Advising on curriculum. Locating financial support. Influencing key decision makers. An advisory committee can do all this and more. That’s why it’s an important part of the National FFA Organization’s National Quality Program Standards.

Just recently, Grand Lake High School in Cameron Parish, La., was asked to participate in the National Quality Program Standards. “The first thing the standards required were to meet with your advisory committee and develop priorities,” says Grand Lake agriculture instructor Scotty Poole, who runs the school’s agricultural education program with instructor Kim Montie. “We didn’t have an advisory committee at the time, and we honestly didn’t understand their purpose.”

Poole’s opinion changed once he began working with an advisory committee.



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“Once we got them together, everyone had great ideas with all sorts of resources from their various backgrounds,” Poole says. “It was like a feeding frenzy of ideas.” His three-month-old advisory committee is made up of people with agricultural, educational, parenting and business backgrounds, to reflect the community as a whole.

Ideas are more than welcome as the school faces challenges beyond the typical program issues. Located in the “heel” of Louisiana’s “boot,” Grand Lake High School sits in southwest Louisiana, about 20 miles from the gulf and about the same distance from Texas—and was directly in the path of Hurricanes Rita and Ike. “We took a direct hit with Rita in 2005 and a sideswipe hit from Ike in 2008,” Poole says. “In our parish, we lost three schools with Rita, and our enrollment doubled overnight. We also lost our barn and some other facilities here, and we’re trying to work with FEMA, insurance companies and grant programs while serving a very diverse group of kids.” Partly in response to the changing student population, the school has eliminated its fourth-year agriculture program, will soon eliminate its third-year program, and is replacing those classes with specialty courses that will cater to the students’ diverse interests, as well as the community’s needs.

“We do a lot now with landscape design, which is a big need since everyone’s homes and landscaping were damaged or destroyed in the hurricanes,” Poole says. “Many of our students literally lost their homes with Rita, and some of them lost them again with Ike.”

The hurricane chaos delayed the formation of Grand Lake’s advisory committee, but now that the group is in place, the teachers are very glad to have it. Louisiana’s educational standards are changing, and the agriculture program needed to let students know that the Agriculture I and II classes count as a science credit under the new guidelines. The advisory committee helped brainstorm ideas, leading to a student project of creating marketing brochures for counselors to use with students and parents.

The advisory committee at Grand Lake was also instrumental in influencing opinions during school construction plans. The limitations of the agriculture program’s current space were discussed at an early advisory committee meeting, and members spread the word among administrators, school board members and other opinion leaders. “The next thing we knew, a whole new wing for the agriculture and FACS departments was passed at a school board meeting with the funds available!” Poole says.

Eddy’s advisory committee in Iowa has been similarly helpful. Though the group initially intended to meet about twice a year, they currently gather every two to three months to focus on a big goal: adding an animal science curriculum and a second teacher to the program. “Our

strand now is based on horticulture, greenhouse, turf and landscape, but we have a lot of student interest in animal science,” Eddy says. “That’s one reason I started the advisory committee, to help us become a two-strand program.”

The National Quality Program Standards have helped lead the Southeast Polk advisory committee. “We use the NQPS worksheets to see where our program is at now and where we’re headed,” Eddy says. “We used the Standards as an assessment tool and gave ourselves marks. I really like those Standards; it’s a snapshot that helps you look at what areas we’re doing well and where we can improve. And they get everyone pulling in the same direction.”

With the animal housing issue resolved, Eddy’s advisory committee is focused on helping him develop animal science curriculum for the new program proposal. “They’re definitely exceeding my expectations,” Eddy says of the advisory committee. “They’re an excellent sounding board for my ideas of what the program can become, and they are prepared to take our ideas up the chain of command when we’re ready.”

Both Eddy and Poole say the advisory groups are more valuable than they could have imagined. “I think it’s one of those things that’s easy to put off when you have other priorities,” Eddy says. “But having an advisory committee is definitely one of the things I wish I would have pushed for a little sooner.”

Poole concurs. “We were thinking an advisory committee was just a formality we had to put in place,” he says. “We were pleasantly surprised and even shocked at how receptive the group was and the value that they’re already providing to our department. It’s been a really good thing.”

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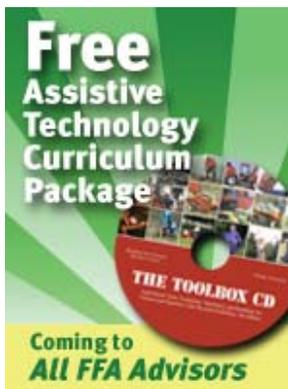


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### Who Provides the Influence to Improve Your Program?

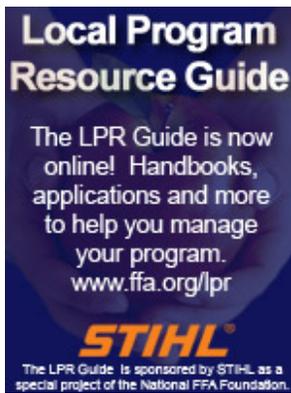
By Hugh Mooney, California Regional Supervisor

As I prepare this article, the national unemployment rate has reached 8.5 percent (higher in many states); the stock market has fluctuated in a 7,000-point range; and I actually feel good about paying \$2.39 a gallon for diesel. Because of this uncertainty, there are few extra resources available, causing many states to make cuts to educational funding. Have agricultural education programs positioned themselves to survive?

If your local politician were to visit your school and ask you to show him how your use of financial resources has improved your program, would he be impressed with how you have invested the money? When you spend your Carl D. Perkins funds, are they used as intended for program improvement? Have you built relationships with your administration, school board and community so that they appreciate the value of your agricultural education program? Does your community take ownership of your program? If resources are short, will your program be the first to see cuts?

I often hear from agriculture teachers when they are having difficulties with an administrator. They share with me how their program is being cut or changed by the administration and how they won't listen to how it will negatively impact the agricultural education program. After they vent for a while about how unappreciative the administration is, I always ask them the same question, "What does your advisory committee say?" Often, the answer is, "I have not talked to them yet." An administrator in a local school district may not be inclined to value concerns expressed by a single teacher. But I will let you all in on a secret. When an administrator is contacted by influential members of the community, he will listen.

The National Quality Program Standards were created as a project of the National Council for Agricultural Education. Let's take a look at Standard 7 which states, "A system of needs assessment and evaluation provides information necessary for continual program development and improvement." I realize that many states have had program



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standards for many years. It is one thing to have identified program standards. It is quite another to have a program that exemplifies those standards. If your agricultural education program meets the National Quality Program Standards at an exemplary level, then your administration knows that they had better support your program or find a new job.

Based on Standard 7, items that a quality advisory committee will be involved in include the following:

- A formal annual program evaluation
- The program uses an advisory committee, authorized by the local board of education
- The agriculture program's advisory committee is reflective of the agricultural populations and local community
- The advisory committee meets regularly and maintains minutes of each meeting
- Advisory committee assists with all aspects of program operations

I assume that you are familiar with the components of your state's plan for career and technical education. It likely includes a statement that references the need for an industry-based program advisory committee for each CTE program assisted with Perkins IV funds. The make-up of that committee is critical to program success.

Far too many agricultural education advisory committees were created to meet a minimum requirement of a district, state or federal program. Over the years I have participated in many workshops designed to help teachers make better use of advisory committees. Often, when I ask a teacher about the make-up of the committee, I will hear that they have a spouse and an old friend or former classmate on the committee. These people may be willing to come to a few meetings, but will their involvement on the committee have a positive impact on the program?

Will your friends conduct a formal annual program evaluation and provide recommended action for program improvement? Will this group of friends be reflective of the community? Most importantly, are they people of influence in the community? We must always remember that the local school board sets policy for your school district. If you have an advisory committee that meets the criteria outlined in the NQPS, then they should have some influence. Ask this question to determine the level of influence of your committee: Can members of your committee pick up the phone and have a conversation with members of the local school board? After all, it is the local school board who sets policy. The administration is hired to carry it out.

It has been my experience that, regardless of the quality of the program, there is always room for improvement. To be certain that you are making decisions that are in the best

interest of the program and the students it serves, you need objective advice from a group of people who collectively are the pulse of the community and are people of influence. If the loudest voice heard when a program is under fire is the teacher, then we must wonder if the program is based on the needs and desires of the community or the preference of the teacher.

We often think that if we work hard, that will be enough. What communities want are agricultural education programs that provide opportunities for students. For some it may be classroom instruction. For others it may be leadership development or a supervised agriculture experience. An effective agricultural education advisory committee will help develop a program that will integrate all three.

Most of you have heard of John C. Maxwell. His definition of leadership is, "Leadership is influence, nothing more and nothing less." I tend to agree. Where does the influence for your program come from?

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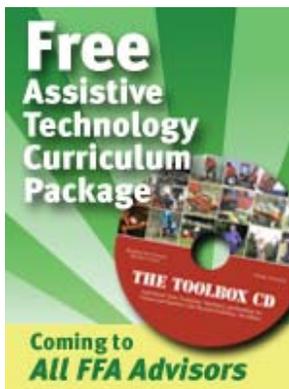


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## LifeKnowledge Spotlight

### Using the LifeKnowledge Precept Indicator for Data Tracking

LifeKnowledge® has created a great data tracking tool for skills surrounding premier leadership, personal growth and career success. Since 2007 this tool, the Precept Indicator Assessment, has been assessing learners' levels of achievement within the cornerstones of the FFA mission.

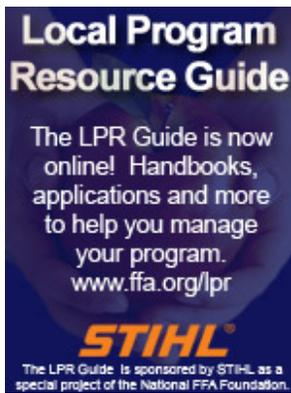
"It is hard to assess students in areas of vision, professional growth and other seemingly intangible precepts. The LK Precept Indicator is unique in that it is one of the few formal assessments of its kind that I am aware of that assesses the precepts," says Wes Crawford, an agriculture educator at Sutherlin High School in Sutherlin, Ore. "Teachers have been evaluating premier leadership, personal growth and career success by the demonstration of skills, but there has not been an assessment tool in these core precept areas until now."

The indicator is broken down into 15 pre- and post-tests—one of each for each of the precepts. The assessments consist of three different question types: scenarios, general knowledge and analysis questions using graphs and charts. The indicator is designed to provide immediate feedback to show a learner's strengths and areas of growth potential.

"Using pre-test results, I focused my teaching on the specific areas challenging the students and did not spend as much time on the precepts in which they collectively scored well. By using the indicator, I was able to tailor the curriculum to the needs of the class," Crawford said.

After completing the assessments, three reports were compiled that provide valuable data based on students' performances. The following reports are available:

- Assessment Overview Report:
  - Provides an overview of results for one or more assessments. This report can be used to easily evaluate overall student performance on a particular precept.
- Coaching Report:
  - Provides detailed results for one participant taking one assessment. This report is available to the student upon completion of the online assessment. The



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coaching report supplies a description of the level the learner has achieved in regards to their level of mastery on that precept. It also provides next step activities to help the students achieve the next level of mastery.

- Grade Book Report:
  - Provides a complete table of assessments and participants showing the scores achieved on the indicator. Using this report, you can easily assign students tasks or responsibilities within your class that would target specific areas in need of growth and development.

The Precept Indicator is a validated and reliable assessment that gives you the data that you need to prove that your program is developing the leaders for tomorrow. In today's teaching world, we are being held more accountable for our students' success; therefore, it is crucial that we are able to provide proof to administrators and community supporters that we are educating our students to become positive, influential leaders within their careers and communities. These skills and precepts are not just a desired outcome; with the new National Content Standards, it really is a must-have.

"One of the best rationales to teaching LifeKnowledge lessons is that you get more bang for your buck," Crawford said. "During my thesis research, I found that even though I taught only eight lessons and focused on three precepts, surprisingly the results of the post-test showed significant improvements not only in the precepts taught but also in many related areas. When the semester is already packed with too many things to learn, it's great to know the LK lessons can be effective in a short amount of time."

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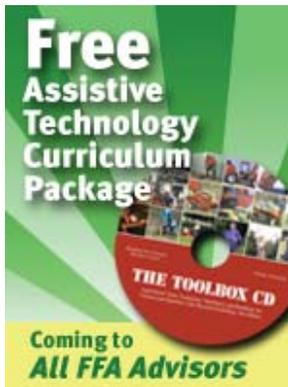


# Making a Difference

The Resource for Agriculture Educators

April 2009

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## Question for the Profession



### Where did all the Advisory Committees Go?

By Nina Crutchfield, Local Program Success Specialist

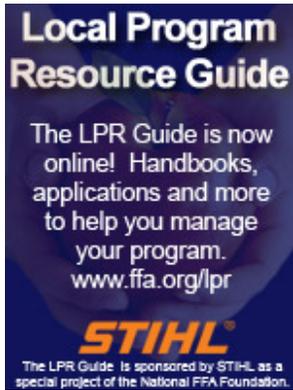
Early agriculture educators saw the value in getting community input, advice and vision. Religiously, they would meet with local citizens to take the temperature of their program—making sure what they were teaching was what the community needed, listening to local agriculturalists share their observations about student skills, and learning what new technologies were making their debuts on local farms.

Despite the obvious changes to agriculture and the agricultural education program, many teachers still practice the tradition of advisory committees. They still seek input from their constituents to identify the appropriate direction for their programs. But for every one of those teachers who has an effective advisory committee, there are probably two or more teachers who have them on paper only.

Perhaps seeking input takes too much time, too much effort, or we don't believe we will like what we hear. Whatever the reason, the benefits of developing and engaging a group of local citizens in the process of program visioning and evaluation far outweigh the costs. The members can serve as advocates before issues become a problem for the teacher, they can help teachers identify what students need to be successful in the local job market, and they can help the teacher visualize the rewards of a strong program for years to come.

So, with all the benefits, where did all the advisory committees go? Why has a whole generation of agriculture educators created an advisory committee that exists only on paper to satisfy Perkins' requirements? This is not a rhetorical question. Please share your thoughts on why teachers, including yourself, do or do not have an advisory committee in the NAAE Communities of Practice at:

[http://naae.ca.uky.edu:8080/clearspace\\_community/message/2820#28](http://naae.ca.uky.edu:8080/clearspace_community/message/2820#28)



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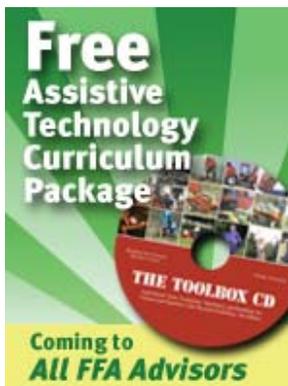
# Making a Difference

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## Teacher Resources

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### Time Lapse Senescence

Need a good visual of senescence? Check out the time lapse video of a strawberry growing and ripening in 17 seconds on the [Blahut Strawberry Farm website](#).

### AFBF Lessons for Less

Find [reasonably priced materials](#) for your next Food for America activity, PALS event or Ag in the Classroom lesson. The American Farm Bureau Federation website has ready-made lesson plans, farm fact books and poster kits at a price you can afford.

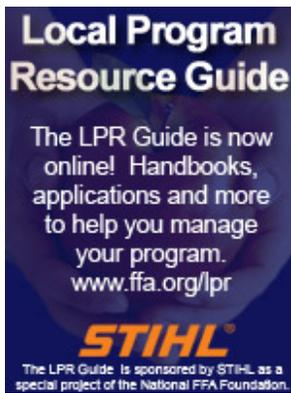
### Grants Target Rural Communities

[Pioneer Hi-Bred International's Community Investment Program](#) supports efforts to improve the quality of life in the communities where the company's customers and employees live and work. The company focuses its grant making in the following areas: education, with an emphasis on science; agriculture; and farm safety. Priority is given to nonprofit organizations located in Pioneer facility communities or rural agricultural regions. Organizations with active Pioneer management/employee participation receive priority consideration. Requests may be submitted at any time and are reviewed quarterly. Visit the website to learn more about the program; click on [U.S. Grant Guidelines](#) to access the grant application.

### Energy Training for Agriculture Professionals

The [National Center for Appropriate Technology](#) and the [Center for Environmental Farming Systems](#) are pleased to announce a new energy training opportunity funded by the Southern SARE Professional Development Program. The first Energy Training for Agriculture Professionals course will take place near Goldsboro, N.C., September 30–October 2, 2009. Topics will include energy-efficient farming systems, biofuels, biopower and solar and wind energy. Tuition, materials, lodging and meal expenses will be fully paid for successful applicants, along with most or all travel expenses.

Eligible applicants will come from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas,



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Virginia, Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands. Priority will be given to extension agents and specialists, although field staff members from any U.S.D.A. agency are also eligible to apply. For more information and application forms, visit the Energy Training for Agriculture Professionals [website](#), or contact [Carol Moore](#). Applications are due April 30, 2009.

### Futures Channel

Real Math, Real Science, Real Careers is the motto of the Futures Channel, which connects learning to the real world. On their [website](#), you'll find videos that illustrate agriculture's connection to algebra, statistics and business.

### Denim Recycling Drive

Help your students "go green" and take part in a service learning activity by participating in [National Geographic Kid's denim recycling drive](#). Students can donate old jeans to help create natural cotton fiber insulation that will be used in homes damaged by natural disasters.

### Ag in Space

No, it's not a bad episode from The Muppet Show! Use this website and its resources to spice up your plant science lessons, introduce students to biotechnology, and make a connection between your class and the real world. You can find several lesson plans, resources and activities at <http://www.spaceag.org/index.htm>.

### Servant Leadership: A How-To Guide

The Timberland Company believes in making a difference in the communities where they live and work. By engaging dedicated volunteers in service events that develop civic leadership and build civic pride, and by finding opportunities to invest resources, they share core values of humanity, humility, integrity and excellence. This [Service Tool Kit](#) has been created from firsthand experience to help develop and execute meaningful service events from start to finish. Information to get organized, recruit and manage volunteers and deliver superior results has been included. Use the [Service Tool Kit](#) to help plan your next FFA community service project.

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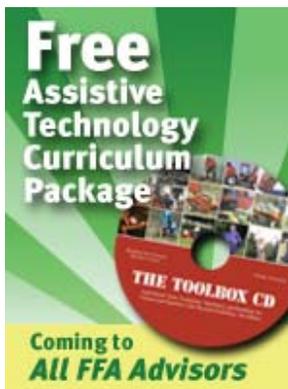
# Making a Difference

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## FFA Buzz

Print this Article



### FFA Today episodes on DVD

Teachers, keep an eye on your mailboxes! A DVD compilation of 10 FFA Today episodes is being sent to all chapters so you can use them for classroom or chapter activities. A listing of what's on each episode will also be available at [ffatoday.ffa.org](http://ffatoday.ffa.org). In addition, you can watch a new show each week on [ffa.org](http://ffa.org) and sign up for our RSS feed to get episodes sent to an online reader or MP3 player.

### New Fees to be Implemented for FFA New Horizons K-type Subscriptions

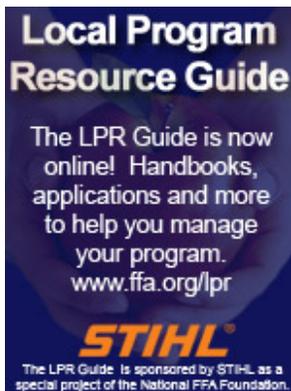
Beginning Sept. 1, 2009, the cost of a K-type/gift subscription to FFA New Horizons will increase from \$7 to \$12. The fee hike is due to the magazine's increasing production and overhead costs. For the past several years, the \$7 fee failed to cover the production costs of these subscriptions. The increase more accurately reflects the true production cost of each subscription. The decision to raise this fee was approved by FFA management last August. If you have questions, contact [Julie Woodard](mailto:Julie.Woodard@ffa.org) at 317-802-4310.

### Nominating Committee News

Nominate a student for the 2009 National Officer Nominating Committee! Nominations are now open for the 2009 National Officer Nominating Committee. If you are an advisor, state staff member, alumni or sponsor and would like to nominate an FFA member to serve on the 2009 National Officer Nominating Committee, log on to [MyFFA](http://MyFFA.org) and click on the Nominating Committee link in the left hand menu. If you have any questions, please contact [Mike Honeycutt](mailto:Mike.Honeycutt@ffa.org).

### "Help Grow Your Soup" Spring Campaign

FFA is once again teaming up with Campbell Soup Company to roll out the next exciting phase of "Help Grow Your Soup." The focus of the spring campaign is gardens, tomato seeds and PALS. The website, [www.helpgrowyoursoup.com](http://www.helpgrowyoursoup.com), is up and running again and for every click, Campbell will donate 50 seeds to FFA chapters across the country. And there's more! Anyone who purchases Campbell's Condensed Soup and enters the code on the can at [HelpGrowYourSoup.com](http://HelpGrowYourSoup.com) will receive a free packet of Campbell's tomato seeds to plant and grow at



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home. With each request, more seeds are donated to FFA chapters – with the goal to grow one billion tomatoes.

Throughout the months of April and May, gardens will be planted in five cities. Along with a group called Urban Farming, Campbell is partnering with FFA chapters that have PALS programs to plant gardens in New York City (April 16), Atlanta (April 21), Camden (May 2), Chicago (May 12) and Detroit (May 20). The events kick off with the NYC garden, and Danny Seo, HGTV host and gardening guru, will be the spokesperson.

### **Paint a Barn, Change a Life**

Campbell Soup Company and the National FFA Alumni Association are celebrating the success of the Barn Preservation Project and looking forward to the next year of barn restoration. Each barn preservation will enable farming families to update and revive their planting and harvesting processes, while providing an educational opportunity for FFA members and mentorship opportunities for FFA Alumni members. Five barns will be selected for 2009-2010. Applications are available at [www.ffa.org/alumni](http://www.ffa.org/alumni) and must be submitted by May 15, 2009. To learn more about the project or to follow the progress of each barn restoration, visit [www.helpgrowyoursoup.com](http://www.helpgrowyoursoup.com). For more information contact [Lucy Whitehead](#) at 317-802-4420.

### **LifeKnowledge® University: LifeKnowledge Webinar – Coaching 4 Life**

On Thursday, May 14, 2009, from 6-7 p.m. EST, the LifeKnowledge Center will host a live webinar open to all who want to learn more about not only preparing students for classroom success, but also coaching them for success in the game of life. This is a great professional development opportunity.

Sign up to attend the live webinar by e-mailing your name, e-mail address and chapter ID to [konline@ffa.org](mailto:konline@ffa.org). Hurry – space is limited. Once you register, you will receive login information for the webinar via the e-mail address you provide. If you have questions, please e-mail them to [konline@ffa.org](mailto:konline@ffa.org).

### **Global Youth Service Day**

Global Youth Service Day is the largest annual service event in the world. GYSD highlights and celebrates the difference youth make in their communities year-round through community service and service-learning. On April 24-26, 2009, millions of young people will participate in and lead service projects in all 50 states and in more than 100 countries around the world. These young people, working with their families, schools, community organizations, faith-based communities and businesses, will improve their communities by addressing critical issues such as global climate change, education and illiteracy, poverty, health, hunger and homelessness. Learn more about GYSD,

download planning resources, and register your project at [www.YSA.org/GYSD](http://www.YSA.org/GYSD). Remember to log your service hours into the Million Hour Challenge database at [www.ffa.org/mhc](http://www.ffa.org/mhc).

## **2009 National FFA Convention News**

### **Advisor's Planning Guide Available Now**

The First Edition Advisor's Planning Online Guide is available at [convention.ffa.org](http://convention.ffa.org). From planning tips and fundraising ideas to instructions on how to secure hotel rooms, we have the information you'll need to begin planning your trip to Indianapolis for the 82nd National FFA Convention, Oct. 21-24.

And don't forget: In August, watch for the Second Edition Advisor's Planning Online Guide on [convention.ffa.org](http://convention.ffa.org). This guide will only be available online. Questions? Contact [Julie Woodard](#) at 317-802-4310.

### **First Annual Teachers' World at the 2009 National FFA Convention**

The place to be at this year's convention is the brand new "Teacher's World" area! Agriculture educators will have the opportunity to engage with fellow professionals at this new home of the interactive classrooms. Make plans to visit and engage in a variety of professional development activities, ranging from the Agriscience Ambassador's inquiry-based lessons to the Pfizer classroom highlighting industry-based animal science lessons. The first annual Teachers' World will be an educational and informative networking destination for the 82nd National FFA Convention. Look for more details in future issues of Making a Difference and the Advisors' Planning Guide.

### **Convention Housing Update**

2009 National FFA Convention housing for chapters is open. Advisors need to login to their [MyFFA](#) account to get the hotel listing. Questions? Contact [Ellen Williams](#).

### **Reserving Rooms for Other Chapters?**

If you are reserving rooms for other chapters, and each chapter will pre-register for convention independently, 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 already submitted your chapter form and need to update this information, please contact [housing@ffa.org](mailto:housing@ffa.org).

### **National Chapter Going Digital**

Starting this year, convention information for Star and Models of Innovation chapters will only be sent digitally. We are requesting that chapters be sure to include active e-mail addresses on their applications for the sake of

these communications. Communications for chapters without e-mail addresses will be sent to state staff for distribution. The National Chapter Award deadline is July 15. Also, we would like to remind state staff to file your NC forms A and B 30 days in advance of your state convention in order to receive your plaques and spurs by the convention date.

### **Agriscience Student and Teacher Still Accepting Applications**

Both programs are currently open and accepting applications for the 2009 convention. The deadline to apply for either program is July 15. Applications can be found on the [Agriscience Fair and Awards page](#) of ffa.org. If you have any questions regarding either program, contact [Tyler Easton](#) at 317-802-4335.

### **Agriscience Fair Applications for 2009 Convention Available**

The 2009 Agriscience Fair application period is now open. Applications can be found on the [Agriscience Fair and Awards page](#) of ffa.org and carry a deadline of August 15. If your state hosts its convention after this date, exceptions can be made through your state staff. If you have any questions regarding the Agriscience Fair, contact [Tyler Easton](#) at 317-802-4335.

### **FFA Volunteer Judges Sought**

The National FFA Organization is accepting volunteer judge nominations for the agricultural proficiency awards; agriscience fair, agriscience student and agriscience teacher awards; and national chapter awards at the 2009 National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Ind., this fall.

- Agricultural proficiency and Star awards judging takes place on Thurs., Oct. 22, 2009. Proficiency and Star judges will be invited to an awards luncheon on that day.
- Agriscience Fair and Student awards judging takes place on Thurs., Oct. 22, 2009.
- Agriscience Teacher Awards judging takes place on Fri., Oct. 23, 2009.
- National Chapter Awards judging takes place on Wed., Oct. 21, 2009.

Convention judging is voluntary. FFA is unable to cover expenses for the judges.

Log on to ffa.org and click on the [Convention Judges Nomination Form](#) to submit nominations. Mail completed forms to National FFA Organization, Attn. Teri Buchholtz, P.O. Box 68960, Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960 or fax to 317-802-5419.

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