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The Resource for Agriculture Educators

September 2009

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Achieve Balance in the New School Year
Juggling Act: Finding a Balance Among the Three Circles of Agricultural Education

Agricultural Education: Career or Lifestyle?
Balancing Act: Two Agriculture Teachers Share How They Balance Their Career with Their Personal Lives

Achieve Balance in the New School Year

By Amber Striegel, Editor

The new school year has begun, and, like many, you have probably vowed to do a few things differently this year. Maybe you're going to add a new agriscience class or two to reflect the changing industry of agriculture; perhaps you've organized an advisory council to help with your SAE visits; or, maybe you've spent the summer updating the barn and are planning to introduce some new animals to your animal science class. We all have new goals and plans we add to our list each year. But no matter what is at the top of your priority list, it should always involve "balance."

Whether you're seeking balance between your personal life and your work life, balance between your program and FFA activities, balance when it comes to making your profession your "life" or your "job," or ALL OF THE ABOVE, one thing is certain: balance should be near the top of your list this and every school year. This issue of Making a Difference is dedicated to balance and helping you achieve this ever-elusive goal.

Since most agriculture educators lack circus experience, they're left to their own ingenuity when it comes to juggling. Yet all agricultural education programs are required to keep three balls (or the Three Circle Model of Agricultural Education) balanced and moving. The challenge is to keep them all moving forward without...well, dropping a ball!

Read [Juggling Act: Finding a Balance Among the Three Circles of Agricultural Education](#) to see how three teachers make it happen.

There are so many opportunities in agricultural education that a teacher could probably work every single day of the year and still miss out. Juggling all of the demands of the classroom with engaging in SAE/FFA and attending to family priorities has long been a challenge for the dedicated agricultural education instructor. Check out [Agricultural](#)



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[Education: Career or Lifestyle?](#) to see what works for three teachers who seem to have the hang of it.

If there is a casualty in Desirae Weber's ongoing battle to master her jam-packed calendar, it's the laundry. For the active, married mother of a 19-month-old boy, it's a sacrifice she's more than willing to make. Weber would rather make time for the things she enjoys—an ambitious agenda that isn't for the faint of heart. Discover how she and others balance their personal lives with their workload when you read [Balancing Act: Two Agriculture Teachers Share How They Balance Their Career with Their Personal Lives.](#)

In [Finding Balance as an Agricultural Science Teacher](#), Colorado teacher Todd Thomas gives us a firsthand look at his experience achieving balance in his profession, whether it's making time for a growing family or taking on a new agriculture program in a new town. Or, in his case, both at the same time!

This month's [LifeKnowledge Spotlight](#) focuses on achieving balance in the classroom by engaging your students in their learning and allowing them to put more effort into their learning process. Check out the tips, and then try a free LK lesson plan!

And finally, interact with your peers when you visit the NAAE's Communities of Practice forum to comment on Nina Crutchfield's Question to the Profession this month: [How do you Create Balance when you Can't Even Find the Scales?](#)

I hope this issue of Making a Difference finds you diving headfirst into the new school year and achieving some balance along the way. As always, we love to hear your questions and comments, so please keep them coming to astriegel@ffa.org.

Hope to see you at national convention in October!

Amber Striegel
Editor

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Juggling Act: Finding a Balance Among the Three Circles of Agricultural Education

By Beth A. DeHoff

Since most agriculture educators lack circus experience, they're left to their own ingenuity when it comes to juggling. Yet all agricultural education programs are required to keep three balls (or circles) balanced and moving—classroom/laboratory, supervised agricultural experience (SAE) and FFA. The challenge is to keep them all moving forward without...well, dropping a ball!

Cory Wedel is in his 11th year of teaching at Stratton High School in Stratton, Colo. He is the only agriculture teacher in the small high school of 60 students, 35 of whom are members of the FFA chapter. In addition to chapter and classroom work, Wedel's students participate in SAEs and have competed at local, district, state and national levels. When asked how he does it all, he has a quick response: "My first thought is...I have no idea."

Upon reflection, Wedel credits organization and planning for part of his success in balancing his program; and his 10 years of experience and some awesome students account for the rest of it. "I didn't jump into everything at once; I kind of worked it all in gradually," Wedel says. "Just don't bite off more than you can chew. Kevin Keith from national FFA told us that just because FFA offers 25 programs, that doesn't mean your chapter has to participate in all of them. Pick the ones that work best for your program, your school and your community."

Beth Dickenson teaches agricultural science and technology in a small Oregon high school, where she arrived three years ago to start an agriculture program. She relies on her community and started an FFA alumni chapter last year. "I have used many of those community members as award presenters (sponsors) at the banquet, practice judges for leadership CDE practices, and as guest speakers/tours for my classes," she says. "Another idea I'd like to try is to have



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a group of community members that would be willing to help make SAE visits.” She advises teachers to be willing to ask for help from the beginning. “I’m a bit of a control freak, but I am working diligently to give that habit a rest,” she says. “I’ve learned that delegating ideas and projects to my student officers and committees is better for all. Just because it’s not my way doesn’t mean it’s not right.”

Cody Weber has been teaching agriculture for five years, three of which have been at Limon High School in Limon, Colo. Today, 35 of the 120 students at the school are FFA members. He says that providing all elements in the three circles of agricultural education is the primary goal of his growing program. “When you have all three circles going on, students get to learn and serve others. Each circle complements the others,” he says. “The hardest part is keeping all three components equally important.” Weber relies on chapter officers, each of whom coordinates a leadership event for FFA members and an educational event through the school year, taking much of the FFA workload off the teacher. Weber also has added an office within his advisory council titled “SAE coordinator.” This adult volunteer keeps a list of possible SAE opportunities and submits it to Weber twice a year. “It has already been very helpful in placing students in areas they are interested in,” he says.

Weber suggests teachers consider the expectations of students and adults in the community and avoid trying to create a perfect program quickly—an impossible task. “As time progresses, start brainstorming with the advisory committee, administration and other influential people about where to start improving; and, if you haven’t had experience with the National Quality Program Standards (available on ffa.org), this is a great tool to use for program improvement,” he says. “Once you have isolated an area to improve on, figure out a way to make it a responsibility that others can take over or help with. Repeat this process often, but make sure you have enough time available to make it progress continuously, while trying to lead a ‘non-workaholic’ life!”

Wedel says he has used 11 years of teaching to help him set priorities and delegate. “If officers are truly officers, they should be doing the majority of the work for the chapter. When I was a young teacher, I was the main officer,” he says. “Now they do more of the work, and I’m in the background. It should be little me, big them.”

All three teachers agree that offering leadership opportunities to students and volunteers can do more than improve your program. It can make your juggling act more manageable and leave some time for juggling some other important priorities—like your family, friends and other interests. “We have to be smart about how we manage our lives, not just our careers,” Wedel says. “Narrow things down and choose what’s essential. And try not to compare

yourself to others who have been doing this a lot longer than you!”

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Agricultural Education: Career or Lifestyle?

By Deb Buehler

There are so many opportunities in agricultural education that a teacher could probably work every single day of the year and still miss out. Juggling all of the demands of the classroom with engaging in SAE/FFA and attending to family priorities has long been a challenge for the dedicated agricultural education instructor.

"I followed my older brothers into FFA as soon as I could," says Josh Hopkins, a third-year teacher at Graham High School in Graham, Texas. "I played sports and did well in school, but the agriculture department was my mainstay. It was there that I learned the most, and it influenced my career decision."

Hopkins is a one-man agriculture department, coming in after the retirement of a 25-year agriculture teacher. Hopkins is steadily building relationships of trust with students, parents and the school's administration.

"It takes time to build relationships so that everyone understands the daily, weekly, monthly and yearly activities of the department now," he says. "It means stopping in to see the principal, attending FFA board meetings, and talking with everyone to let them know what we are doing."

Hopkins believes that his work is both a job and a lifestyle. It is a job in that there is always the possibility of being fired or needing to make a professional change. It is a lifestyle because of everything involved and what it represents.

"The hardest part about it is drawing the line and leaving the job to go home to be a husband and a dad," Hopkins says. "I have an agreement with my wife that if it gets to the point that I need to scale back, to be more attentive at home, she'll tell me."

For second-year teacher Jessica Geisler of Shenandoah High School in Middletown, Ind., FFA and her role as an

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agriculture educator is central to her life. "I would say it is more of a lifestyle than a career," Giesler explains. "When all your friends and family and the people you interact with from your FFA past or present are intertwined, it is your lifestyle."

Agriculture educator Tera Harlow strives to find balance by keeping her work and home life separate. Working in a department of four teachers makes it a little easier.

"In our department, there are three main tasks on top of teaching: parents group (alumni), being the advisor to the students and managing the district, state and national activities. We work on a two-year rotation in each area," she explains. "Right now I'm the liaison for the parent group, so I don't have to go to the officer meetings or plan events because I don't have those roles. It's nice to rotate through and not have to be involved in it all."

For Harlow, who teaches at Rockville High School in Vernon, Conn., being an agriculture teacher isn't a 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. job. "You know you are going to go above and beyond," says Harlow. "I knew what to expect because I came up through an agriculture program."

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Balancing Act: Two Agriculture Teachers Share How They Balance Their Career with Their Personal Lives

By Michael Rubino

If there is a casualty in Desirae Weber's ongoing battle to master her jam-packed calendar, it's the laundry.

"Laundry at our house?" says the agriculture teacher from Platte Valley, Colo. "It just kind of eventually happens. I usually try to start a load before I leave in the morning, then get to it when I get to it."

For the active, married mother of a 19-month-old boy, it's a sacrifice she's more than willing to make. Weber would rather make time for the things she enjoys—an ambitious agenda that isn't for the faint of heart.

In addition to her regular duties at Platte Valley High School, the new mom presides over an active chapter of 110 kids and, along with her husband, is a youth pastor at her church—a position that requires attendance at services on Sundays and Tuesdays, and teaching a class on Wednesday nights. Weber's husband, also a teacher, is the head wrestling coach at the high school and rides bulls in a pro rodeo circuit.

At least Weber knows when she's coming and going, even if onlookers might not. "I'm a huge calendar person," she says. "I know what I'm doing even until next May."

In addition to knowing where she's headed at all times, Weber knows who'll be along for the ride: her family. "Go together," she says. "That's our motto." And if they can't do it together, Weber says it's probably something not worth doing.

She says it helps that her husband shares in her interests and he in hers, and that the couple splits the domestic workload, 50-50.

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“We just kind of make it happen, and we’ve gotten very good at multi-tasking,” Weber says. “I’m lucky that my husband is willing to do anything and everything: breakfast, diapers, bathing—whatever it takes. And I’m the same way.

“This is our lives. This is what we love to do. If it wasn’t, we wouldn’t be able to do it.”

Trisha Hunter, a teacher from Sioux County in Harrison, Neb., has an equally hectic life. She’s married with three children—ages 2, 4 and 6—and, in addition to teaching, helps her husband tend to 400 head of cattle on a family ranch established in 1885. And, to get to school from her home in South Dakota, Hunter must drive at hour on dirt roads with her kids in tow. That means the gang needs to be up, dressed, fed and out the door by 6:30 a.m.

She said she used to be like Weber and admires anyone who can keep that schedule. But for Hunter and her family to be happy, she says they need to set aside time for themselves to recharge and refocus.

“I’ve been doing this for nine years now, and I’ve seen a lot of people in this profession burn out,” she says. “It’s a lot to put on your plate. When I first started, I wanted to set the world on fire, but I eventually realized there are only so many hours in a day. So, you do the best that you can do, and that’s all anyone can ask of you.”

It’s crucial, she says, to take advantage of peer support in the agricultural education community. Don’t be afraid to take advantage of that help, she advises.

Hunter says it helps to have a supportive husband and teach in a small community where everyone is pulled by similar demands.

“We have a small school—22 kids—and I think all but two are in our chapter,” she says. “The nice thing is that people around here understand that we are too small to be good at everything. So, we pick a few things out and do them really well instead of trying to take on everything and end up doing a crappy job.”

Hunter says a lot of her free time is occupied by working on the ranch. And though she finds fulfillment and solace in performing many of those duties, it got to a point where it felt like she and her family were working all of the time. So this summer the family built an arena where they could ride their horses and spend time together (everyone, including the toddler, has a horse) roping on the weekends.

“It’s important, I think, to take a break,” she says. “It seemed like we were working all of the time. We still work a lot, but now we’re finding ways to enjoy ourselves a little more.”

Even if it’s just an hour or so of quiet time.

“Most of the day, my husband doesn’t see anything but cows, and I don’t see anything but kids,” says Hunter. “So, after our kids go to bed, it’s nice to sit down and have an adult conversation.”

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Perspectives

Finding Balance as an Agricultural Science Teacher

By Todd N. Thomas, Agricultural Science Teacher,
Caliche High School, Iiff, CO

When asked to write this article, I questioned what to actually write about because the word balance can have many different connotations. Some people ask, "Can you truly have balance in your life as an agriculture teacher?" To answer that question, we need to find a definition for *balance* to use in the context of this article. A quick Google search defines balance as "an ability to maintain the center of gravity of a body within the base of support with minimal postural sway." Does that clear up anything for you? I didn't think so. In the context of this article, I would like you to think about balance as "striving for equilibrium in our lives."

As I sit here in front of my computer, I've taken some time to reflect on the many demands an agriculture teacher has to juggle—making home visits, gathering materials for class/shop, planning trips, fundraising, attending numerous meetings, serving as the FFA advisor, etc. When I attended Colorado State University, I remember Dr. Cross explaining to us anxious student teachers that when we start our careers, we cannot forget to take time for ourselves and our families. But we also must remember that, as agriculture teachers, we become much more than a teacher to our students. They can and will see us as someone they can confide in—someone who will guide them in life and present them with skills and opportunities for success that they would not have had if it weren't for us. We have to be teachers, guidance counselors, career advisors, bookkeepers, problem solvers, role models and, a lot of times, good listeners. (I remember thinking to myself, "No pressure there at all!")

My first teaching job was in a very small rural school where the size of a typical graduating class was eight students. My wife, baby girl and I moved there the summer after my college graduation. My wife and I were aware that everyone knows everyone in small-town America; but what we were not aware of was that everyone knew us before we even arrived in town. It was during that summer when I was cleaning the shop and the classroom – organizing and making it my own – that those words of Dr. Cross came

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back to me. As I continued working, some of the local students stopped by to meet the new agriculture teacher and get a feeling of what school might be like this fall. The questions they asked were not really related to school at all. They wanted me to know about themselves and what they did at home and wondered if I was going to come see them at their homes. They didn't even know me yet, but they wanted me to know them.

As I arranged to make summer visits, I was surprised to find the first question from parents and students was "Where are your wife and little girl? We thought for sure you would bring them, too." What Dr. Cross was telling us was that as agriculture teachers, we need to become part of the community...and make a life for ourselves and family.

As my experiences as an agriculture teacher grew, so did my family. It was not uncommon to see my two daughters in the shop or classroom or even accompanying me on home visits. My wife has accompanied me on judging trips and numerous state and national convention trips as a sponsor. She has also helped prepare food for banquets and fundraisers and has been a terrific sounding board for me during my career. If you are an agriculture teacher or are about to become one, remember there are no do-overs in life. Be aware of your surroundings. Your spouse may not be as dedicated as you are, so supper at a restaurant (just the two of you!) is a good idea.

Agriculture teachers are undoubtedly busy people and are usually the last to leave the school at night; but they also have a unique ability to be there for their kids to watch an after-school ballgame or a play. To help achieve balance, we as agriculture teachers have to be able to say the word "no." Agriculture teachers, as a rule, are typically able-bodied men and women who can and usually do get things done—no matter the time given them. Being able to say "no" doesn't necessarily mean you are less dedicated; it just means that you are striving for that equilibrium or balance that I mentioned earlier.

Our lives become so involved at times that it can seem a like a juggling act. We work so hard at trying to keep each part going that, on occasion, one ball drops, falls to the wayside and is ignored. With that image in mind, I would like you to think about this: What if we found the balance between our personal lives and our professional lives much the same as the three circle model of agricultural education? (FFA, SAE and classroom/lab instruction) The circles could have different contexts for different people (e.g., family, faith and profession), but the message is the same: All three need to be juggled or balanced to create a whole unit that is intertwined with our lives.

You may think to yourself, "But what happens when part of my class has to be excused for an assembly, and I was in the middle of a great lesson?" Or "What if my son or

daughter has a ballgame at the same time as a district FFA activity?” Or, “What if my spouse needs me at home?” As with anything in life, you will experience some setback, chaos and struggle; it is inevitable that we all will experience some difficulties. It doesn't, however, mean that you concede defeat and destine yourself to live your life out of balance. Doing your best is the best you can do.

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LifeKnowledge Spotlight

Who's Exhausted at the End of the Day?

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The last bell of the day has rung, and students enthusiastically hustle out to the buses and their cars. They are making plans for the evening, and their energy level seems to have sky-rocketed. An hour later the teachers make their way out to their cars, exhausted from the day.

Does this scenario sound familiar? At the end of the day, our students have heaps of energy left to expend, and we teachers are worn out.

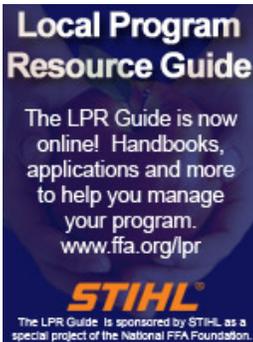
How can we engage our students more in the learning process? Here are four ways to allow your students to put more effort into their learning.

The use of e-Moments is one way to allow students to discover new information for themselves. An introductory e-Moment such as the [Little Professor Moment](#), allows students to take ownership of learning the information and holds them accountable for relaying the information on to their classmates.

Secondly, when they are able to explore and then define information, it is more likely to be remembered. One example of this method may be to allow students to explore different types of soil, write characteristics describing each type and, once they have discovered the characteristics for themselves, add labels to the samples. In education we call this discovery before labeling. Not only will you find yourself repeating the core content less and spending less time lecturing, your students will also be better prepared to participate in and make connections in extended-thinking activities. Help them to remember and save your breath.

Delegate, delegate, delegate! Classroom chores and maintaining a lab can be a lot of work. Delegating tasks to students helps them learn responsibility and grow as they serve in the classroom. Try using a delegating system in your classroom such as a chore-wheel, where students spin the wheel to determine their responsibility for the day or week. Allow the students to take ownership of the lab by assigning a lab foremen system, giving each student a chance to be accountable.

Another way to delegate and engage students in the learning process is to print off a LifeKnowledge lesson and



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allow a responsible student to lead the class for the day. LifeKnowledge lessons are fully-scripted with all the activity sheets and assessments necessary to teach an entire class period. You'll keep the students engaged and have them walking away with a peer-to-peer learning experience.

Lastly, the use of effective directions will save time and energy. Within the LifeKnowledge lessons are some great examples of effective directions. Committing yourself to utilizing the key components of effective directions can alter the organization of a class period immensely. How much energy do you put forth giving directions to the class, repeating yourself because they weren't clear, or the students simply stopped listening as soon as you said "While working with a partner I want you to..."? Directions are a necessity every day in the classroom. Here are some tips on delivering them successfully:

Effective direction review: Make use of action verbs, attention signals, time limits, beginning signals, and don't forget to check for understanding. It may sound something like this: "When you hear the word LIST, write down as many commodities produced by our state as you can think of on a scrap piece of paper. We will have 60 seconds. What questions do you have? LIST."

Another great time-saving way to check for understanding is to have one of your students repeat the directions back to the rest of the class. The class will hear the set of directions twice, but you only said them once. This will keep the students more attentive if they know the potential of being called on is there.

From e-Moments to checking for understanding, there are lots of ways to keep students involved. Let's commit ourselves this year to allowing our students to work more and put more effort into their learning. Put the class in motion and step back into the master facilitator's role—not that of the task master.

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e-Moments®

Little Professor Moment



BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

When we teach something we tend to learn it better. During the Little Professor Moment portions of the content are taught to half the students at a time. Then, students take turns being “Little Professors” to their partners. Here’s how you can set it up.

THE PROCESS:

- 1. Chunk your lesson.** Determine the portions of information. Make the portions uniform both in amount and number so that the time spent teaching each group of students is approximately the same.
- 2. Establish roles.** Each student exhibits two roles—one while they are taking notes and one while they wait. While they learn from you, they are eager learners, full of wonder and interest. While they wait, they are the “invisible person,” sitting still and neither moving nor speaking. Note: Some students may find being “invisible” too challenging. Instead of sitting still and silent, they can read.
- 3. Establish personas.** Review with students the characteristics of a stereotypical university professor. As they teach the new material they act as if they have their PhD in the subject area, and from this point forward are referred to by their peer as Dr. (fill in their last name). For ease of teaching, address the first student in each pair as Little Professor I and the second student as Little Professor II.
- 4. Teach the first chunk.** Little Professor I listens and takes appropriate notes. Keep this short and to the point. Little Professor I then teaches his or her partner. This is a timed event! Give them only 30 to 60 seconds to instruct. Before moving to the second chunk of information, check Little Professor II’s understanding.
- 5. Teach the second chunk.** Now it’s Little Professor II’s turn to take notes. Little Professor II will then teach his or her partner.
- 6. Repeat the cycle.** Repeat steps 4 through 7 for as many chunks of information there are.

Let students teach one another as you guide them.



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Question for the Profession



How do you Create Balance when you Can't Even Find the Scales?

By Nina Crutchfield, Local Program Success Specialist

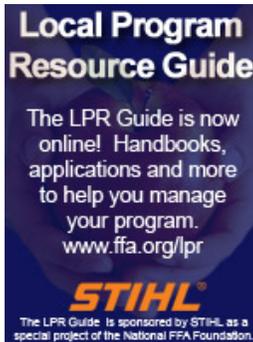
Whenever anyone mentions the word "balance," I always picture Lady Justice standing there with a blindfold on and the scales of justice in her hand. Then I think, "Blindfolded?! How are you supposed to create balance if you can't even find the scales?" Of course, the metaphor of blind application of justice doesn't apply when we talk about balancing time and effort between family and work; between instruction and FFA activities; or, between what is required and what is enjoyable. But the question of balance still remains a big issue in our profession, as illustrated by the articles in this month's edition of [Making a Difference](#).

Everywhere I go teachers and state staff lament the decline in the number of agricultural education majors graduating and entering the classroom, the number of good teachers that leave the classroom and never return, and keeping teachers engaged without burning them out. So, where in these discussions is the solution for helping teachers create balance? Is balance a romanticized reverie? Is balance only created long after teachers have become veterans, after children are in high school, after spouses have become accustomed to the extra hours we spend at school?

Perhaps a better question is, "Do we really want balance?" Maybe we, in some strange way, like feeling stressed and exhausted, playing the woeful martyr for the cause of agricultural education and FFA. Maybe we've become so comfortable with our constant state of pandemonium that we don't even notice discomfort, paperwork piling up, or our disenfranchised personal lives. Maybe we're not even looking for the scales that are buried under mountains of leadership lessons, CDE training, state standards and other duties as assigned? Or, is it something altogether different?

Please post your thoughts, concerns and opinions about creating balance in the [NAAE Communities of Practice Question for the Profession](#).

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Making a Difference

The Resource for Agriculture Educators



September 2009

Teacher Resources

Print this Article

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National Teach Ag Day – February 25, 2010

Mark your calendar to celebrate the first ever National Teach Ag Day on Feb. 25, 2010! This is a special day set aside for current agriculture educators to talk with their students about why they chose to go into agricultural education and to encourage those students to also consider a career in the field.

February 25 (Thursday of National FFA Week) was chosen because so many potential future agriculture teachers are in FFA; but National Teach Ag Day efforts will include agricultural education at every level, from elementary level agricultural literacy efforts to postsecondary agriculture programs.

Plan to include a lesson on Feb. 25 about the opportunities in agricultural education. NAAE is developing resources to help you start the discussion, including lesson ideas and a video, all of which will be available for free closer to the date.

[Click here](#) for more information and resources for National Teach Ag Day.

Beef For Excellence

Check www.beefexcellence.com to find production calendars, calculators, etc., organized by industry segment. The resources section contains lots of great links (Steer Planet) for students interested in livestock.

Nutrients for Life Free Curriculum

Visit <http://www.nutrientsforlife.org/leaders/teachers/curriculum/> and look for "For Tomorrow's Leaders." Then go to "I'm a Teacher" and "Teacher Tested Curriculum." At the bottom, in the middle, click "Get Curriculum for Free."

National Institute for Animal Agriculture

[NIAA](#) is your source for information, education and solutions related to animal agriculture. Find resources for training students to properly and safely handle a variety of livestock species, links to the latest news in animal agriculture, and national reports concerning animal health.

**Local Program
Resource Guide**

The LPR Guide is now online! Handbooks, applications and more to help you manage your program.
www.ffa.org/lpr

STIHL

The LPR Guide is sponsored by STIHL, as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

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Aquatic/Fishery Sciences Day

If you want to teach an aquaculture course but need more information, get set for a fun day of learning about biology, chemistry, engineering, mathematics, nutrition and careers through aquaculture/fisheries activities. Experience fish anatomy, pond sampling techniques, water chemistry, fish id and trivia and much more on Sept. 24, 2009, at University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. For more information contact [Cassandra Hawkins-Byrd](mailto:Cassandra.Hawkins-Byrd@uaex.edu) at 870-575-8123 or cbyrd@uaex.edu.

Parliamentary Procedure CDE Seminar at the 2009 National FFA Convention

The Society for Agricultural Education Parliamentarians is offering an evening seminar for advisors and a limited number of FFA members titled, "Training a Team for the National FFA Parliamentary Procedure Career Development Event." Log on to www.saep.us and click on "CDE Seminar" for topics, instructors and registration details. Enrollment is limited, so register today.

UGA Center for Urban Agriculture

Find over 250 fact sheets relating to the industry of horticulture and links to other horticulture research institutions [here](#).

Engage Your Students in Innovation!

National FFA is now the official Agriscience Advisor to the Pete Conrad Spirit of Innovation Awards program. This is an exciting opportunity for both teachers and teams of students. The Pete Conrad Spirit of Innovation Awards program challenges teams of high school students from across the United States to solve real-world problems by creating products using science and technology. Top teams have opportunities to commercialize their products. The 2009-2010 competition features four challenge categories: aerospace nutrition, aerospace exploration, renewable energy, and sustainable schools (energy). For more information, please visit the [Conrad Foundation website](#) or contact [Aimee Wright](#). Information will be available soon on the FFA Agriscience Fair & Awards page at ffa.org.

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FFA Buzz

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The National FFA Commemorative Coin Act (U.S. Senate Bill #1553 and U.S. House of Representatives Bill #3464) will seek a U.S. minted commemorative coin honoring the 85th anniversary of the National FFA Organization in 2012. FFA is working with key leaders in Congress to promote and gain co-sponsors of the bill. In order for the bill to emerge from committee, FFA must list 67 Senate co-sponsors and 290 House co-sponsors.

Here's how you can get involved: Use the NAAE Legislative Action Center to contact your senators and congressional representatives and urge them to co-sponsor this bill.

- Visit the NAAE website: www.naae.org
- Enter your ZIP code in the "Contact Congress" block in the left margin of the home page
- Go to Issues and Legislation
- Select "The National FFA Commemorative Coin Act" option (under Current Action Alerts)
- Read the Action Alert
- Complete the editable message
- Send it to your two senators and one representative

This commemorative coin act will honor a venerable national agricultural education organization with a wide impact. If you would like to see FFA immortalized and honored on a U.S. coin, please let your legislators know.

FFA Volunteer Judges Sought

The National FFA Organization is continuing to accept volunteer judge nominations for the agricultural proficiency awards and Agriscience Fair at the 2009 National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Ind., this fall.

- Agricultural proficiencies and Agriscience Fair judging takes place on Thurs., Oct. 22, 2009. (Proficiency judges will be invited to an awards luncheon that day.)

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

Go to http://www.ffa.org/documents/conv_judgenomform.pdf to submit nominations.



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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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SAE Grants Available

SAE grants of \$1,000 each will be made available this year, subject to sponsorship. [Click here](#) for the list of available grants.

These grants are awarded to FFA members who are between the ages of 14 and 17 in the 2009 calendar year and are based on financial need. Grant applications must be postmarked by November 15, 2009. Contact [Deborah Sellers](#) for more information.

Collegiate Convention

The collegiate FFA team has been busy planning for the 2009 Collegiate Convention. A few of this year's highlights include:

- Collegiate Convention registration is online. [Click here](#) to register today! Registration will be easier than ever. Resumes received during registration will be handed out to all Career Finder and Career Expo companies.
- The Collegiate Career Expo has moved. The Expo will be held on the East Concourse of Lucas Oil Stadium this year. The Expo will run from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sat., Oct. 24. Numerous agriculture companies will be participating in the Expo, looking for potential interns and employees. Please encourage all college students to attend and to come with their resume in hand.

For more information on the Collegiate Convention, please visit the [Collegiate FFA website](#).

2009 National FFA Alumni Convention

The 2009 National FFA Alumni Convention is just around the corner. The theme of the alumni convention encourages members to "Say It, Do It, Live It!" for agricultural education. Alumni members from across the nation will attend workshops, receive awards, select their national Alumni leaders and receive updates about their association. Visit www.ffa.org/alumni for more information on the alumni convention.

One of the highlights of the Alumni convention is the 2009 National FFA Alumni Benefit Auctions. This year's theme is Mission: Possible! Helping generate scholarship funds for FFA members.

You can become a "special agent" and assist the National FFA Alumni Association with its mission to raise funds for WLC and collegiate scholarships. The success of the 2008 National FFA Alumni Benefit Auctions provided 154 scholarships for FFA members to attend WLC and five collegiate scholarships for students to study agricultural education. The goal is to raise \$170,000 this year, so make sure you participate in the benefit auctions and become an FFA special agent to ensure that FFA members have this same opportunity in 2010!

Alumni Preserving American Icons

The National FFA Alumni Association and the Campbell Soup Co. Barn Preservation Project has provided a great service to production agriculture, educational facilities, FFA members and FFA Alumni last year through the preservation of five barns in Illinois, Kansas, Tennessee, Oregon and New York. These preserved structures are now shining examples of how FFA and FFA Alumni members continue to "live to serve." Each of the transformations can

be seen on HelpGrowYourSoup.com or view work day footage at www.ffa.org/alumni.

Beginning October 1, the National FFA Alumni and Campbell invite the nation to visit HelpGrowYourSoup.com daily to vote for one of the 10 barns in need of preserving. For each vote on the site, Campbell will donate \$1 to FFA, up to \$250,000, for agricultural education. As a token of appreciation, voters can sign up to receive a free Campbell Soup Co. tomato seed packet in the mail (while supplies last). The five barns that receive the most votes will be preserved as a part of this year's Help Grow Your Soup Barn Reviving Program.

Importance of Alumni

Why start an alumni affiliate? Your FFA alumni affiliate can be a wonderful resource of support for FFA advisors, serving as mentors for FFA members, advocates for agricultural education, identifying funding opportunities, helping to prepare teams for competition and much more. To learn more about starting your own alumni affiliate visit www.ffa.org/alumni.

FFA-themed Float in 2010 Tournament of Roses Parade

On New Year's Day 2010, keep your eyes peeled for a Tournament of Roses Parade float featuring FFA. Longtime FFA sponsor RFD-TV will present a tribute to the National FFA Organization on its 2010 Tournament of Roses Parade float titled "FFA Today," incorporating floral-filled scenes of the FFA emblem, the iconic blue corduroy FFA jacket and symbols of agriculture past and present. The 2010 Tournament of Roses Parade theme is "A Cut above the Rest," and that ties in perfectly with today's FFA. Thanks to RFD-TV for sponsoring this tremendous opportunity.

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Due to National Center by June 1, 2009

**Star, Agricultural Proficiency Award and Other Selection
Committee Recommendations**

The following individual should be included among those invited to judge National FFA Awards, Agricultural Proficiency Awards at the National FFA Convention this fall:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Company/Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Region: _____ Telephone (Area Code Number) _____

E-mail Address: _____

Email address is required as we will be utilizing electronic judging packets in 2009

(Please complete a separate form for each individual that you nominate.)

The nominee is best qualified in one of the following award categories:

	1st Choice	– Other Choices
Agricultural Communications Entrepreneurship/Placement	_____	_____
Agricultural Education – Entrepreneurship/Placement	_____	_____
Agricultural Crops Entrepreneurship/Placement	_____	_____
Agricultural Livestock Entrepreneurship/Placement	_____	_____
Agricultural Mechanical/Technical Systems	_____	_____
Agricultural Sales Entrepreneurship or Placement	_____	_____
Agricultural Services Entrepreneurship/Placement	_____	_____
Emerging Agricultural Technology	_____	_____
Equine Science Entrepreneurship or Placement	_____	_____
Food Science and Agricultural Processing	_____	_____
Fruit or Vegetable Production	_____	_____
Horticulture or Nursery Operations	_____	_____
Natural Resources Management & the Environment	_____	_____
Small Animal/Specialty Animal	_____	_____
Veterinary Medicine	_____	_____
National Chapter	_____	_____
Agriscience Fair	_____	_____
Agriscience Students and/or Teachers	_____	_____

Person making nomination: _____

Please send all recommendations to:

Teri Buchholtz
Program Manager
National FFA Organization
P.O. Box 68960
Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960
Or FAX: (317) 802-5419