



February 2009

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Teaching and Marketing Agricultural Education – It Starts with You
Marketing 101: Do great things, involve lots of people and tell everyone about it

Sharing Your Story: Spreading the Ag Ed message | Recruiting the “Microwave Generation”

Teaching and Marketing Agricultural Education – It Starts with You

Marketing expert and author Jay Abraham said, “The fact is, everyone is in sales. Whatever area you work in, you do have clients and you do need to sell.”

Everyone except for you, right? After all, you’re an agriculture teacher. What does teaching have to do with sales and marketing?

In a word, everything.

Unfortunately, agricultural education isn’t considered a core program in schools, like language arts or math. You’ve got to have a school administration supportive of offering agriculture classes, students who are interested in taking the classes and parents who support their child’s interest in agriculture. And if you sit idly by, waiting for all of these to fall into place, well, you could be sitting for a while.

In addition to teaching, mentoring and inspiring students, you also need to sell them on the importance and relevance of agricultural education. The best marketer for your program is the success of your students, so getting them excited about agriculture is key. From there, they will tell friends, parents, the school board, and even their congressmen how they’ve been positively affected by agricultural education, helping to build a strong and supportive network. But the fact is, it all starts with you.

This issue of Making a Difference is dedicated to the fifth National Quality Program Standard, marketing and advocacy. Don’t worry if you’re not a salesman by nature. We’ll show you tips and tricks on how to make your program thrive.

Most agriculture educators are happy to blow their students’ horns, but ask them to create a marketing plan, and the hesitation is understandable. Most have never even set foot in a marketing class. But there is hope! Check out

[Marketing 101: Do great things, involve lots of people and tell everyone about it](#) for marketing ideas.

As far as being a teacher goes, your plate likely has a lot more on it than most. In addition to teaching, mentoring and encouraging students, you're actively helping kids with SAE projects and contests and attending workshops and conferences. So where do you find the time to throw in marketing? Read [Sharing Your Story: Spreading the Ag Ed message](#) to learn how some teachers make it happen.

Many label today's high-schoolers as part of the "Microwave Generation," or those who find identity in the latest technology and expect the instant gratification that comes with it. These kids often expect to be entertained and have more options competing for their time than generations of the past. How do you as agriculture educators recruit these students into your programs? Read [Recruiting the "Microwave Generation"](#) to learn how.

[The Three C's of Agricultural Education Marketing and Advocacy](#), an editorial by retired agriculture teacher Jack Roszel, focuses on connections, communication and community, and how these pieces of the puzzle fit to form a marketing plan of action.

The key ingredient to making any marketing or advocacy program a success is not only knowing the audience that you are addressing, but also knowing the product you are marketing. As educators, the product that is your greatest asset is the success of the students you teach. It is important to make sure that the students are utilized and that they have the opportunity to be spokespersons for the chapter. Read [Students: Our Greatest Assets](#) to learn more and get a free LifeKnowledge lesson plan!

And finally, let us know your tips or challenges when it comes to marketing your program by visiting the Communities of Practice page on NAAE's website and answering this month's Question for the Profession: [How Do You Market Your Program with Intent?](#)

I hope you find this information useful in building a thriving agricultural education program. Have a great FFA Week, and don't forget to visit ffaweek.ffa.org for fun ideas on how to use this special week to do some marketing to potential students!

Amber Striegel

Editor

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Making a Difference

The Resource for Agriculture Educators



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wlc

Registration is open!

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Marketing 101: Do great things, involve lots of people and tell everyone about it

By Beth DeHoff

If you take the time to thank your volunteers, send news releases to the media, and send your administrators notes about what your chapter is up to, then we’ve got news for you: You are a marketing professional.

Most agricultural educators are happy to blow their students’ horns, but ask them to create a marketing plan, and the hesitation is understandable. After all, agriculture and teaching are their areas of expertise. Most have never even set foot in a marketing class.

Nevertheless, having a marketing plan is a key way to ensure that you’re telling your story well, and you don’t need an MBA to do it. With some careful planning of your year’s activities, you can make marketing a part of every effort. You’ll even find help on ffa.org to do it!

Mark Burdick has been teaching agriculture and leading his FFA chapter for 30 years, and he’s still in the thick of it at Housatonic Valley Regional High School in Falls Village, Conn. “Our major marketing effort involves recruitment – speaking to the eighth-grade students in the region,” he says. “We also use our FFA banquet and open house as marketing tools for the community, as well as individual class projects and service projects such as Habitat for Humanity.”

Burdick also takes students to legislative meetings and professional association meetings, sharing the story of their agricultural education program to key leaders in the community and the state. “All of our key audiences are invited to our faculty breakfast, where they can meet and spend time together,” Mark says. Their annual open house, which gives the students experience in presenting demonstrations, is also a key marketing effort, where more than 80 members of the community come in and assess each student’s work.

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Alice Dubois started marketing her agricultural education program before she even knew she was doing it. Dubois teaches at Ponchatoula High School in Ponchatoula, La. "When I first came here, I was the only Ag teacher and, out of desperation, I got an advisory committee together. The ag department had been dying, and the superintendent told me when I was hired that the department would only be there for another year," she recalls with a chuckle, now 15 years later. "Maybe we backed into it, but anytime you have an advisory board and involve anyone in the community or even just the school community, you're an advocate for ag education, and you're communicating and marketing."

Over the years, Dubois, with the addition of a second agriculture teacher, has become more concentrated in her program's marketing efforts. "Donna and I are walking, talking marketing tools for Ag Ed because we love it so much. Our students are the same way. When the kids go out into the community to do service projects or to the junior high school to teach science experiments, those folks better be ready to hear about Ag Ed because our students love it and talk about it all the time," she says.

These enthusiastic agricultural education ambassadors include a student reporter and a student marketing committee who write and send news releases and maintain a website. "Our emphasis here, especially since Hurricane Katrina, has been service. Service is great to help people, but we've learned what a tremendous benefit it is to students – to help these young people build character and skills," Dubois says. "And when you're out there helping people, the local newspaper covers the good things you do, and then people get curious and wonder, 'who are these kids?'"

In addition to sharing their service stories with the media, the public website and school officials, the chapter places articles in the state FFA newsletter. The chapter also hosts a large conference every year with varying themes, involving the state universities for help (and to see some agricultural education students they might want to have at their university). "Last year we invited the lieutenant governor's office to come to the conference, and they came," Dubois says. "This year they called and asked if they could come back!"

The chapter also reaches legislative leaders. Teachers take the FFA officer team to the state capitol, where they visit with legislators and sit in on legislative committee meetings. It's educational for the students, but it also exposes legislators to the agricultural education story, courtesy of some very enthusiastic student leaders.

Most recently, the FFA chapter led a dog therapy program for fellow students in special education classes. "It was in many ways a miracle. Kids spoke during the program and at the banquet who had never said a word before. The special

education teacher was in tears because she had never seen those kids do so well,” Dubois says. “And my Ag Ed students – it changed their lives. I had two boys with discipline problems that led that dog therapy program with such care and concern.” In addition to leading the dog therapy sessions, the students made dog biscuits and sold them, using the money to purchase FFA jackets for each of the students in the dog therapy program. Now, a student-produced DVD documentary about the program is being sent to opinion leaders, universities and every FFA chapter in the state.

Whenever activities like this take place, Dubois e-mails the superintendent and his secretary. “They see students winning awards, providing service and going to student development events, and then we come back and tell them how we did and what the kids got from the experience,” Dubois explains. “You always have to keep putting the story out there, so people understand that kids are building the skills employers want – skills that will allow them to be comfortable in a crowd, talking to a lot of people. We have students who couldn’t talk to an adult on a very basic level before they got involved in FFA. Now they’re stepping up and talking with the lieutenant governor and the secretary of agriculture.”

The Ponchatoula High School chapter’s marketing plan involves real activities that develop students’ skills and leadership, advocate for agricultural education, and touch the community in real and meaningful ways. If you can manage to do that, all that’s left is to simply help your students tell others what you’re doing, through news releases, notes and presentations. “As you step out and do bigger and broader things, that just expands your influence,” Dubois observes. And as it turns out, expanding your influence is the very pinnacle of marketing.

For more information on marketing, including a packet of marketing forms and education, visit the educators’ workroom section on marketing at ffa.org.

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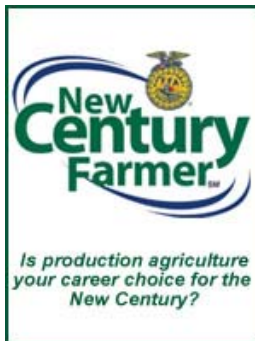
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Sharing Your Story: Spreading the Ag Ed message | Recruiting the “Microwave Generation”

Sharing Your Story: Spreading the Ag Ed message

By Beth DeHoff

As far as being a teacher goes, your plate likely has a lot more on it than most. In addition to teaching, mentoring and encouraging students, you’re actively helping kids with SAE projects and contests and attending workshops and conferences. The fifth FFA National Quality Program Standard tells you that you should also be actively marketing and communicating all the great things you’re doing...but isn’t it enough just to DO them?

It might seem that telling the story of your FFA chapter is something easy to ignore compared to your other responsibilities, but teachers who have tried it have found just the opposite to be true. Consistently communicating about and promoting your successes is a great way to gain more support for your efforts. And the best part is that the responsibility doesn’t lie solely on you. Many teachers have found ways to make marketing part of their students’ regular activities.

“Marketing and advocacy is always an ongoing task that takes time and effort, but it’s necessary to look for ways to let all of our publics know what we’re doing and why it’s important for us

to be here doing it,” says Paul Larson, an agriculture educator at Freedom High School in Wisconsin. “I want them to not be able to get by without this program and to



know that we're important to the community and its overall success."

To create this awareness, Larson and his students send news releases, run a community food pantry and invite school board members to events. Larson and his students also send frequent notes about their activities, as well as plants and flowers from the greenhouse, to school leaders, thanking them for their work. At the state level, Larson leads an advocacy effort to pass legislation forming an agricultural education workforce development council. Larson's students head to meet legislators every year at FFA Day on the Hill.

Laura Moore, agriculture educator at Plenty Coups High School in Pryor, Mont., is the only agriculture teacher at her small high school of about 60 students. More than half of these students, living in a Native American community full of ranches, are in FFA. The student's major efforts involve running their school farm and raising its livestock (which has impacted the whole community), as well as presenting a program on Native American culture in association with agriculture (a presentation that has won them first place in the FFA/American Indian program at the Montana state FFA convention for the last three years.) Additionally, the students also lead the chapter's marketing efforts.

"We take our presentations, and we go places, and the kids get public speaking experience. If we are applying for grants like the grant from the Montana FFA Foundation to fund our school farm, the kids go to the FFA state board and make presentations about how we're using the money they gave us," she says. The students also give presentations about their activities at state and national conventions, and their chapter reporter writes stories for the school newspaper and news releases for the town newspaper in Billings.



Moore also communicates with other Montana agriculture teachers through a "metnet" that allows state agriculture educators to share information. The result of all this

effort has been continued funding for their programs, donated animals for the farm, and a lively community presence in the program.

Hundreds of miles away in Connecticut, you'll find a different kind of marketing and advocacy effort. Three hardworking teachers have turned an agricultural

cooperative program into a model of advocacy and communications. Jaunice Edwards, director of the Harris Agriscience and Technology Center near Hartford, Conn., brings a corporate environmental background to the center, which pulls from five school districts around the area for a two-year agriscience program. These students can get science and honors biology credit for high school through the center, and a college residency program lets the students earn college credit, while allowing an area university to get to know the program and students. Other efforts are designed by teachers and students, and largely carried out by students and their community supporters.

“We do a lecture series called ‘The Power of Agriculture,’ and we invite a list of about 12,000 people to come see a series of speakers one afternoon a month, from February to May,” Edwards says. The event includes a meal that incorporates lettuce and other products organically grown by the students, and well-known speakers talk about topics such as buying locally grown food. Leaders from around the area are invited to introduce the speakers. “The mayor of Bloomfield came recently,” Edwards says. “And at our annual FFA banquet, we invite leaders from each town where our students live.”

Area middle school and elementary school students also come and spend the day. “Our students will do an aquaculture unit for the children, and it’s a really fun day. Some of the kids will plant, and others will collect eggs from the chickens. Our students run all the workshops.” The FFA students also visit local elementary schools to educate children about reptiles and how to care for them. These experiences meet the students’ education and FFA obligations, while providing an active and ongoing presence in the communities they serve. It’s even a good way to recruit future FFA members!

Each year, the students prepare a brochure about the program that is mailed to every eighth-grader in the area, and they hold an open house for potential students. At the state level, the group advocates for agricultural education at the governor’s mansion, where the governor holds an annual fundraiser to promote locally grown products. Many state legislators attend the event, where they find Harris Center students promoting their Farm to Chef and No Child Left Inside programs.

When they’re not out in the community, the students also run their own flower shop. “Every class puts out a brochure each year,” Edwards says. “Last year we did eight weddings!” They also market the program, make money, and fulfill SAE requirements through the shop. “For Valentine’s Day, we literally spend two days here working day and night. We do bouquets, balloons and flowers, and we do a secret valentine program at school,” Edwards says.

The school farm is also a source of income and SAE credits. “We’ve been featured in the news quite a bit. We’re doing a school lunch program, and we were showcased on two television news programs for what we do with our farm. We raise lettuce and basil here, and the cafeteria uses that for their salads and basil pizza,” Edwards says.

Whatever their activities, the students and teachers are sure to inform the schools, community leaders and area media. Whenever possible, the work is planned and implemented by the students themselves. “We try to step back and let the kids take the leadership role,” Edwards says. The group also plans the entire year’s activities in the summer, including their community events and their marketing and advocacy efforts.

Sharing your chapter’s story takes planning, but with some quick and continuous communication that incorporates the efforts of students, community members and alumni, you can truly enhance the success of your students and your program. In so doing, you’ll turn marketing and communications from “one more thing you have to do” into “the one thing you wouldn’t live without.”

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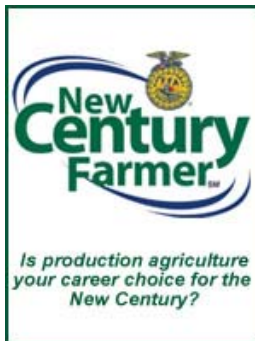
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FEEDBACK

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Marketing 101: Do great things, involve lots of people and tell everyone about it

Sharing Your Story: Spreading the Ag Ed message | Recruiting the “Microwave Generation”

Recruiting the “Microwave Generation”

By Robin Kim

Many label today’s high-schoolers as part of the “Microwave Generation,” or those who find identity in the latest technology and expect the instant gratification that comes with text messages, mp3s, Facebook and Twitter. These kids often expect to be entertained and have more options competing for their time than generations of the past.

How do you as agriculture educators recruit these students into your programs? And with a constant “entertain me” attitude, how do you retain the best and brightest students once they’ve become members?

Another characteristic of this generation is that they tend to believe what they hear from their peers. And since many agriculture teachers would agree that word of mouth is the best recruitment tool, this is a good place to start. But successful recruitment and retention takes more than a “build it and they will come” attitude. “Make it fun, and put in the planning time,” says Becca Wherry, who teaches at Greenbriar in Arkansas. That’s the best way to get students involved and talking about your program.

Programs that recruit well often have a plan that includes student leadership, community involvement and outreach, fun events, and general promotions of their program’s unique



opportunities. But before a strong recruitment plan can work well, Tara Berescik says it all starts in the classroom. “We push and market the classes first,” she said. “Kids take the

classes and then get interested in FFA.” When Berescik began teaching agriculture at Tri-Valley Central in New York, she found herself with 12 active FFA members and 17 agriculture students. Today, she and her teaching partner have nearly 200 FFA members in their chapter and see nearly 500 students in their agriculture classrooms every year.

The Tri-Valley program started in 1951 with a teacher who led the program well in its first 30 years through traditional agriculture courses. But the program had experienced tremendous teacher turnover in the years preceding Berescik. When she came on board, she started teaching new classes, such as pre-vet and horticulture, and added a strong community service component to the classroom. “I knew that once students really got involved, they would see the travel and opportunities and bring others in.”

“We started getting active in the community,” she said. “In my second year, we set the goal that every student would give 200 hours each year to the community, starting in 7th grade. Today, most who graduate in the program have well over 2,000 hours in community service.”

Wherry agrees that it starts in the classroom. “They love anything hands on. The shop and greenhouse are attractive.”



Ping pong tournaments between classes sure don't hurt, either.

Wherry and her two teaching partners also focus on recruitment through two main events, led

primarily by the chapter officer team. First is an orientation night, where all first-year members compete against each other in a game night that often hosts 200 students, parents and family members. “We try to make the activities fun, whether the students have athletic ability or not,” says Wherry. And secondly, the chapter hosts a Christmas party where FFA members can bring their non-member friends. Once they see how fun and exciting FFA is, they want to join, too.

This “Microwave Generation” eagerly shares unique opportunities through word-of-mouth promotion, which is where Lucille Shaw at the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences credits the growing interest in the school. The school accepts 150 new freshmen each year, which is less than 15 percent of total applicants. All 600 students in the school are FFA members enrolled in one of

five unique career paths: Animal Science, Agriculture Finance & Economics, Food Science, Horticultural & Greenhouse Management, and Agricultural Mechanics & Technology.

Shaw said it's the unique opportunities that make students excited to come to the school. "They learn more about the world through our learning approach and opportunities through the National FFA Organization," she said. The school is currently arranging a student exchange with Poland. Polish students will stay with students for a month, and Chicago students will head to Poland for a similar opportunity. "Other students may have that opportunity at other schools, but for our students to study about their economic system and how they produce their food – it's just amazing. We approach it from a different perspective."

What else do these experienced teachers say about recruiting and retaining students in your agriculture programs?

- Alumni can serve a vital role as you recruit students into your programs. They provide job shadow opportunities, help conduct chapter and community events, and even serve students when they need financial help to join or attend a conference.
- Career fairs and open houses can be effective, but it may be even more effective to have promotional materials ready at basic community service events. When parents see an organization doing great things for young people, they want their students to join.
- Officer teams build their leadership skills and demonstrate influence when they plan and execute recruitment activities, whether it's speaking to younger students or planning fun events for the chapter.
- Reward active students for getting active and staying involved through trips or events that result from a specific goal. Show appreciation for their dedication by providing meals when appropriate.
- Use the local media and scrapbooks to document and promote your activities. Students are proud to see their advertisements recognized, while parents and community members gain a stronger appreciation and support for what you do.

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FEEDBACK

Perspectives

The Three C's of Agricultural Education Marketing and Advocacy

By Jacque "Jack" Roszel

Retired agriculture instructor, Allentown High School,
Allentown, N.J.

Connections

I learned very early in my career that establishing connections is very important to the success of a program. I have always worked very closely with parents, administrators, community members, alumni and those in the industry of agriculture. These connections provide different viewpoints and allow us to utilize various professional expertise to strengthen an agricultural education program. Having different viewpoints represented on your advisory committee is also essential because it gives the committee balance credibility. We conduct several advisory committee meetings a year to learn about industry trends, review program content and receive feedback about the three components of our program.

The FFA alumni affiliate is also very important and supportive to our program. Our alumni group raises funds for scholarships and travel. They serve as CDE coaches and provide materials and facilities for events. Public awareness of the Allentown FFA Chapter and the agricultural education program is a natural outgrowth of all of the alumni activities. The funds they raise have a great impact on our chapter, but the community-wide promotion and awareness that they provide is just as valuable.

Our chapter has also made connections with community organizations such as the local Fire Company, Elks Lodge, Lions Club, community service organizations, nursing homes and animal shelters, to name just a few. Students develop rapport with organization leaders and members as they volunteer their time. These connections open doors for our students and provide them with job opportunities, SAE options and many other rewards.

I have built great relationships through connections with local businesses for our program, as well. Businesses can assist your program financially, provide students with SAE employment and be a strong advocate for your program within the community.

Communications and Community

Administrative and community support has been one of the key components of the success of our program and its longevity. Marketing and promoting our program is one of our top priorities, since our community has and is still rapidly changing. We utilize the FFA component of our program to the fullest extent to market the agricultural education program and the FFA chapter. Our chapter reporter sends articles to three local newspapers and the school district's community newsletter. The chapter officers write articles highlighting chapter and individual accomplishments for a special 8-page FFA Week supplement to the local newspaper. They work closely with the newspaper to prepare this supplement, including acquiring local business donations for it (which, in turn, also helps market our program.) Each aspect of the FFA Week news supplement creates awareness about who we are and what the students achieve through participation in the agriculture program and FFA.

The chapter also hosts an annual sponsor breakfast to show appreciation for sponsor support throughout the year. Many prestigious individuals attend this annual event, including state senators and assemblymen, university deans and state education officials. The students conduct the day's activities, showcasing their abilities for all in attendance.

Involvement in community projects is also a great marketing tool to promote our program. Students wear FFA shirts or Official Dress when volunteering to bring visibility to the program. The chapter members record over 1,000 hours of volunteer work annually.

Our program is heavily involved with programs and activities within the elementary school. Programs such as eighth grade orientation, "Agricultural Day," "Bullying Hurts" and the PALS program highlight FFA members' and officers' leadership abilities and promote the program to a younger audience.

In light of today's economic situation, schools need to justify the dollars that are spent on education. I can think of no better way to showcase your school district's successes than through the marketing of your agriculture program and FFA chapter. If you build your marketing plan through connections and communication, then the community will become your greatest advocate.

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February 2009

LifeKnowledge Spotlight

Students: Our Greatest Assets

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By Christine White

Team Leader, LifeKnowledge Center for Agricultural Education



Most people fall into one of two categories when it comes to watching the Super Bowl: Those who love the game and those who tune in simply for the commercials. Either way, companies spend millions of dollars each year crafting advertising campaigns to help sell their products to a specific audience during this exclusive time frame. The campaigns are successful because not only are they viewed by nearly 90 million people watching the game, but you can bet that on the Monday after the Super Bowl, people are still talking about the commercials and are surfing the Internet to find their favorites.



As agriculture educators, we need to learn to model our marketing and advocacy approaches after these companies. Obviously, spending millions of dollars is out of the question, but you can tailor your marketing and advocacy endeavors to meet the needs of the audiences you are trying to attract, like soda and car advertisers do with the Super Bowl. How perfect would it be to give a presentation to your local school board that leaves them wanting to know more about your program? How about developing a “commercial” for the morning announcements that is so inviting to the student body they are stopping by the agriculture department to check out the opportunities available? What about the development of a monthly newsletter that speaks to the parents about getting involved in your program? These are just a few examples of what you can do to help market your program. But it is not necessarily how you get the message across that should be your focus; it should be the message that you are conveying. This is the information that will leave your audience wanting to know more or how they can get involved.

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The key ingredient to making any marketing or advocacy program a success is not only knowing the audience that you are addressing, but also knowing the product you are marketing. As educators, the product that is our greatest asset is the success of the students we teach. It is important to make sure that the students are utilized and that they have the opportunity to be spokespersons for the chapter. Testimonials from your students will make the greatest

impact for your program, as they take on the role of marketer. However, it is your job to help prepare them to be advocates for agricultural education and FFA.

LifeKnowledge® has a few lessons that are a natural fit to help you prepare your students to be successful advocates for your program. Check out this lesson:

- AHS.40 [Becoming an Advocate](#)

Other lessons you might also want to consider to help prepare your students are:

- AHS.49 Promoting FFA—Opening Doors
- HS.21 Positive and Negative Influence
- HS.87 Developing Workshops Using the Magic Formula
- HS.88 Using Key Messages
- HS.90 Presentation tips—Voice and Non-Verbal
- HS.118 Opportunities for Influence

If you'd like more information, contact me today at cwhite@ffa.org.

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Lesson AHS.40

BECOMING AN ADVOCATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Unit. Stage Four of Development—SERVE

Problem Area. How Do I Grow Others and Contribute to Society.

Precepts. E2: Perform leadership tasks associated with citizenship.

National Standards. NL-ENG.K12-4 — Communication Skills — Students adjust their use of spoken, written and visual language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.



Student Learning Objectives. As a result of this lesson, the student will:

- 1 Recognize the importance of the agriculture and natural resources industry.
- 2 Define what being an advocate really means.
- 3 Recognize the avenues of advocacy for agriculture and natural resources.



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Time

Instruction time for this lesson: 50 minutes.



Resources

USDA, Importance of Agriculture.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/RCAT/rcat102/Rcat102d.pdf>



Tools, Equipment and Supplies

- ✓ Writing surface
- ✓ Overhead projector
- ✓ AHS.40.TM.A
- ✓ AHS.40.TM.B
- ✓ AHS.40.TM.C
- ✓ AHS.40.Assess—one per student

Key Terms. The following terms are presented in this lesson and appear in bold italics:

- ▶ Advocacy
- ▶ Advocate



Interest Approach

Activity

In a moment you will shock the class with some surprising and unfortunate news. The legal driving age has been raised to age 21. Try your best to fool students for the sake of making an important point.



Before we get started today I want to let you in on some bad news. I need you to give me your undivided attention, as this is something that affects all of you. As of this morning, the state has placed a temporary ban on anyone under the age of 21 from operating a motor vehicle. For those of you who have not yet received your license, you may not be able to get it now until you are 21. If you have your license, it has been suspended until further notice. This has all happened because the lawmakers feel that your age group is the biggest cause of accidents in our state. What do you all feel about this? If you have a comment, feel free to raise your hand.

Allow for some student response to the state's decision. Responses may include: "this isn't fair," "this is stupid," etc. Once you have the students interested, break the news to them that this really didn't happen, but then ask students what they would have done if it were real.



You all seem to have some passionate comments. But please relax; the state didn't take away your driving privileges. This example was just to make a point to you. If this really had happened, do you know what you really could do to create change in the minds of those who made this decision? Would you be able to give them good reasons as to why you should still have the right to drive? What if I told you that instead of the state taking away your right to drive, it wanted to take away your right to be here in this ag class. What if the state government decided to take away your FFA organization? Then what would you do? Our industry is very threatened by people making decisions for us, with little or no knowledge about how the industry works. Even agricultural education is sometimes threatened. By the end of class, you will know exactly what to do when something like this happens.

SUMMARY OF CONTENT AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1. Recognize the importance of the agriculture and natural resources industry.

Activity

In a moment, you will ask the students to write a list of everything that they have done since they woke up. This includes taking a shower, getting dressed, eating breakfast, coming to school, wearing their backpack, etc. Guide them through as many things as possible. This is an individual activity. Give students approximately three minutes or time as needed based on their prior knowledge.



When I say go, I want you to take out a sheet of paper and record every activity that you have done or item that you have used today. For example, you might say you got up, used the bathroom, took a shower, ate breakfast, etc. This list should include everything that you did up until this point and every item that you needed to use to do it. This is an individual activity. You will have three minutes so work quickly! Please work silently until I say stop. You may now start on your lists!

Circulate around the room to assist students with lists. As students seem to be finishing, give them a 30-second warning. Ask students for examples of items on their lists.



You have 30 seconds left.... STOP! By a raise of hand, who would like to share a few items with the rest of us?

As you call on students, write their activities or items on the writing surface. Collect about three students' ideas.



This looks like a great list. Now comes the challenge. Who can tell me which of these activities would not be possible without agriculture?

Try to show that most, if not all, activities or items on the list are directly tied to agriculture. For example: the shampoo has plant products in it; the food they ate was raised by a farmer; the clothes they are wearing, as well as the towel they dried off with, came from cotton; the paper they are writing on was made from wood fiber, etc.



Can you all see that it is tough to think of things in our daily lives that aren't a part of agriculture? We all take these things for granted. Agriculture is a very important part of every human being's life. Here are a few figures for you to capture in your notes to help explain just how valuable agriculture is to us.

If this information has already been covered, this portion of the activity can be skipped and you may begin with Objective 2.

Display AHS.40.TM.A.

I. Importance of Agriculture

- A. More than one in every six jobs in America stems from agriculture—USDA 2002
- B. We produce an abundance of food, for ourselves as well as for other nations; we export over \$53 billion per year to other nations
- C. Our food is some of the cheapest per capita of any food in the world
- D. Our farmers are the most productive in the world
- E. Many states rely solely on agriculture for their economy
- F. Many crops are grown nowhere else in the world commercially
- G. As the world population grows, agriculture will need to feed all of the world's people

Objective 2. Define what being an advocate really means.

In a moment, you will use a real-life example to show students what an advocate is. Students will pair up and alternate being a parent and a son or daughter. The son or daughter will try to convince the other student that he or she should be able to extend curfew by one hour. Students will have four minutes to complete the activity. During the activity, choose two responsible students

whom you observe in a good discussion, to come forward and reenact their battle with a parent. Ask students to keep score on who makes the better argument. Critique how the example went. Explain that all of the students were just acting as advocates.



When I say go, you are going to break into pairs. One of you will be a parent, and the other will be the son or daughter. All parents please tune out and don't listen to a word I am going to say. Sons and daughters, you are going to try to convince your parents to let you extend your curfew by one hour. Try your best to make this as realistic as possible.



Now I need the attention of all of the parents. Sons and daughters, please tune me out for a moment. Parents, you are going to do your best to avoid saying yes or giving in to your son's or daughter's request. Remember to keep this professional, appropriate for the classroom, and as realistic as possible. You have four minutes. Go!

Observe students and start to seek out volunteers. Give students about four minutes for this activity to allow adequate time for sharing their experiences.



Great job, everyone! Now I need the two I chose to come to the front and reenact your conversation in front of the class. Let's all pay close attention to them. Try to keep score on who makes the better arguments. Make sure to keep your comments to yourself until the discussion ends. OK group, you may begin.

Make comments about the group's performance and how the son or daughter tried to convince the parent.



What we all just witnessed, and what we all just practiced together, was how to be an advocate. This is exactly what an advocate does. In agriculture, we try to get our opinions known and create change for the betterment of our industry and way of life. Remember, as we saw today, there are a variety of ways to do this. Take a minute to capture in your notes what an advocate is.


Display AHS.40.TM.B.

II. An advocate tries to convince others to create change in policy or in the way another person thinks about something. This person could also be known as a promoter or activist on a given issue.


Objective 3. Recognize the avenues of advocacy for agriculture and natural resources.

III. Advocacy—giving aid to a cause

To drive home the point that there are different ways to be an advocate, lead the students to find that they, too, in the last example, had different avenues of advocacy. They could have gone to another parent.

 In the activity before, you all did a great job of acting out a real-life example of advocacy. But what might you have done if your real parent, say, your dad, still said no, even after you gave a great argument?

Lead students to say they might go to their mothers.

 Great. In the same way, you have options when you are an advocate for agriculture. Let's capture a few ways we can affect change.


Display AHS.40.TM.C.

- A. Contact your representative
 - 1. The President
 - 2. Senator
 - 3. Congressional representative
 - 4. State Governor
 - 5. State Senator
 - 6. State Assembly member
 - 7. County Board of Supervisors
 - 8. City Council member
 - 9. Mayor
 - 10. School board
 - 11. Local or state agencies
- B. Contact the press
 - 1. Newspaper
 - 2. Local TV news
 - 3. Radio
- C. How to contact
 - 1. By phone
 - 2. By letter
 - 3. In person
- D. Always remember to keep it positive and be professional.



Review/Summary

Try to summarize the ideas of the day by relating back to the way that the students felt when they thought they may not be able to drive soon. They now have the option to create change and be a true advocate.



Today, you got a chance to see what it feels like when change happens without your input. You seemed very concerned at the idea that you may not be driving any more or any time soon. But after today, you now know that you can channel all of that energy toward a positive end. You know what it means to be a real advocate and where you can apply your advocacy. Agriculture is a very important part of all of our lives, and someday soon, you may find yourselves being an advocate for your way of life. It could be much more important than just driving; it could mean whether or not you will have food to eat. With this in mind, we are going to see whether or not we are up to the challenge of defending our industry...Agriculture.

Use the Eye-Witness News Moment to review. Ask students to create a list of three questions critical to the industry of agriculture. For example, "Doesn't agriculture use up all of our state's water?" Once the students have created their questions, break them into groups of three: one camera person, one reporter and one expert. Have the groups rotate so that each person gets to play each role. When finished, ask for a couple of standout groups to perform in front of the class. Give a few critiques, if necessary.

Wow, you were all experts. Continue to work on these issues, and remember, agriculture is everyone's livelihood!

At this time, pass out AHS.40.Assess.



Application

►Extended Classroom Activity:

Have students find an issue that concerns them and interview others on the issue to find out if there is an overall concern.

►FFA Activity:

Have students participate in the Issues CDE.

►SAE Activity:

Have students write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper outlining why their SAE is valuable to the industry of agriculture.

✓ Evaluation

AHS.40.Assess

Answers to Assessment:

1. T
2. T
3. F
4. F
5. examples from AHS.40.TM.C

AHS.40.Assess Name: _____

BECOMING AN ADVOCATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

▶ True or False

Write “T” for true and “F” for false. (2 points each)

- _____ 1. One in six jobs in America is in the industry of agriculture.
- _____ 2. America exports over \$50 billion in agricultural commodities.
- _____ 3. An advocate must be an elected official.
- _____ 4. An advocate has very few choices to create change.

▶ Short Answer—(5 points)

Briefly answer the following statement.

- 5. List five examples of people one could contact to advocate for agriculture.

IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE

- ◆ **More than one in every six jobs in America stems from agriculture—USDA 2002.**
- ◆ **We produce an abundance of food for ourselves as well as for other nations. The U.S. exports over \$53 billion per year to other nations.**
- ◆ **Our food is some of the cheapest per capita of food anywhere in the world.**
- ◆ **Our farmers are the most productive in the world.**
- ◆ **Many states rely solely on agriculture for their economy.**
- ◆ **Many crops are grown nowhere else in the world commercially.**
- ◆ **As the world population grows, agriculture will need to feed all of the world's people.**

AHS.40.TM.B

WHAT IS AN ADVOCATE?

An advocate tries to convince others to create change in policy or in the way another person thinks about something. This person could also be known as a promoter or activist on a given issue.

TO WHOM CAN I ADVOCATE?

Contact your representative

- The President**
- Senator**
- Congressional representative**
- State Governor**
- State Senator**
- State Assembly member**
- County Board of Supervisors**
- City Council member**
- Mayor**
- School board**
- Local or state agencies**

Contact the press

- Newspaper**
- Local TV news**
- Radio**

How to contact

- By phone**
- By letter**
- In person**

Always remember to keep it positive and be professional.

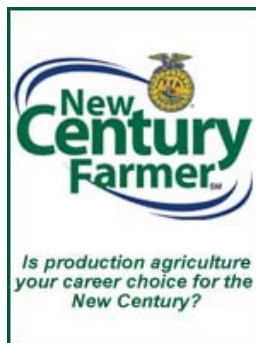


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FEEDBACK

Question for the Profession



How Do You Market Your Program with Intent?

By Nina Crutchfield, Local Program Success Specialist

The reality is that we don't actually have the choice of marketing or not marketing our program. As teachers of agricultural education, we market our program simply by existing. The question is whether we do so with or without intent. Believe me, if you're not marketing intentionally – working a strategy for telling your story and the story of your students – no one will do it for you.

The National Quality Program Standards ask if your school administrators, board members, Alumni, counselors, parents and other community members know what your program goals and objectives are. Do they know your program's course prerequisites? Do they know what your program (not just FFA chapter) is accomplishing? The Standards also ask if you have a written marketing plan that is communicated to the school and community. Do you intentionally recruit students and then work to retain them? Do you report relevant program data to the school and community? Have you worked to develop a positive relationship with local, county/parish, state and national decision makers? Do they understand the value of your program?

These questions can seem pretty daunting at first glance. But think about what you are saying when you choose to say nothing at all. It leaves the door open for a lot of assumptions and misinterpretations by the people that can help you the most and the people that can cause you the most grief. This month's edition of the Making a Difference highlights teachers who do an outstanding job of marketing their unique agricultural education programs. The fact that the programs are unique isn't the key to their success; it's that they tell their programs' stories with intention. They share a number of marketing ideas and strategies that can be transferred to virtually any agriculture program out there.

This month's question for the profession is, "How do you market your program with intention?" I hope that everyone will share that one good thing you do in response to the National Quality Program Standards. This will assist new and veteran teachers, alike, as they work toward sharing the

story of agricultural education with their schools and communities. Please post your ideas on the NAAE Communities of Practice site at

http://naae.ca.uky.edu:8080/clearspace_community/message/2528#25

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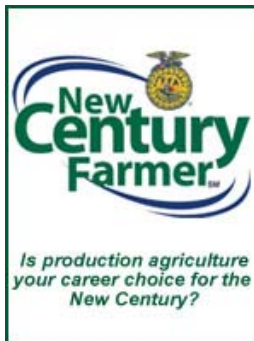
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FEEDBACK

USDA/Agricultural Research Service FUTURE SCIENTISTS Project

This nationally recognized professional development opportunity for science teachers (grades 7 through 12) is offering four, 2-day summer workshops in June 2009. The focus is on insect life cycles, environmental science and ecology. The goals are 1.) To infuse excitement about cutting edge, scientific research into classroom; 2.) To increase use of hands-on, inquiry-based science activities; and 3.) To make the USDA/ARS labs nationwide accessible as an educational resource. Participating teachers: 1.) should work in schools within easy commuting distance of the USDA/ARS lab site; 2.) are paid a stipend of \$300; 3.) are provided free insects during the school year for student research; and 4.) during the year, will select four students to return with them to the USDA/ARS lab in May 2010 to present the school's research findings at a Student Research Presentation Day.

Dates/locations – Arizona: Tombstone USDA/ARS, June 9 and 10, 2009; Tucson USDA/ARS, June 11 and 12, 2009. California: Riverside USDA/ARS, June 15 and 16, 2009; Parlier USDA/ARS, June 18 and 19, 2009. Download more information at

<http://www.science.tamu.edu/files/doc/letterforminiinstitute2009.doc>.

Create Your Own Podcasts Using Gcast

How great would it be for a student who's absent to get his assignments and due dates straight from you over the Internet? Cut down on the time you spend catching them up when you should be delivering another engaging lesson to the entire class. After short tutorials, create a free podcast for your students at <http://www.gcast.com/?nr=1&s=199164330>.

National Power Plant Garden - Virtual Tour

In 2008, USDA developed a demonstration garden of plants with potential as renewable energy sources. As part of the outreach effort, the following website was developed for those who are not physically able to visit the garden. This may be of interest to educators who are interested in helping their students learn about alternatives energy sources.

The Race for Education Scholarship

Scholarship and educational program applications for the equine and agriculture industries for the 2009/2010 academic year are due Feb. 28, 2009. In 2008, The Race for Education awarded more than \$500,000 in scholarships. Visit <http://www.racingscholarships.com/page.php?page=programs> for the following applications:

- Thoroughbred Scholarship (multiple awards; up to \$6,000 per year)
- Horsemen's Scholarship (multiple awards; up to \$6,000 per year)
- Kentucky Horse Council Scholarship (multiple awards of \$1,500)
- K.E.E.P. Scholarship (multiple awards; up to \$5,000)
- Youbet.com/NTWA Journalism Scholarship (one award; up to \$10,000 per year)
- A.A.E.P./Platinum Performance Winner's Circle Scholarship (multiple awards; up to \$5,000)

Putting Cell Phones to Good Use

While it may not be possible for students to use their cell phones during school, what about at meetings and leadership conferences? Get instant feedback by using this on-line polling system. It will certainly engage students and show them how they can be productive with their communication devices. <http://www.polleverywhere.com/>

Cliff Weiss Memorial Essay Contest

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) sponsors an essay contest in the memory of former ACTE senior director of communications, Cliff Weiss (1951-2004). Weiss had a passion for career and technical education. He believed very strongly in the value of CTE and always felt privileged to be involved in bringing the message of this value to the public. Weiss shared his gift for writing and with it enhanced everything that was done at ACTE. The purpose of this contest is to recognize CTE students who share the same passion and talents. One entry in each category, secondary and postsecondary, will be selected to receive an award of \$250. To read more about how to apply for this award, visit <http://www.acteonline.org/content.aspx?id=2572>. Applications for this award are due Feb. 13, 2009.

Rodale Institute 2009 Essay Contest

Rodale announces its 2009 essay contest open to high school students who are FFA members. Monetary prizes will be awarded to the first three winners and their instructors. See complete rules and regulations by visiting

http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/FFA_Contest_2009_Rules.
Deadline for entry is Feb. 15, 2009.

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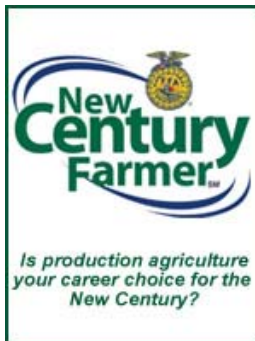


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FEEDBACK

FFA Buzz

National FFA Week Is This Month!

Don't forget to check out ffaweek.ffa.org for the official planning guide, templates and much more. This is your chance to spread the word about agricultural education and FFA. Get in touch with your local media and plan special events. Got news to share? If you get a write-up in the local paper or want to brag about the success of an activity, e-mail ffatoday@ffa.org.

Watch FFA Today

A new episode of the FFA Today television show airs every Wednesday at 6 p.m. EST on the RFD-TV network. You can also watch episodes on ffa.org or by subscribing to our [RSS feed](#). The show, sponsored by Monsanto, is great for the classroom or chapter meetings!

2009 Scholarship Application – Deadline Feb. 17, 2009

The application deadline is rapidly approaching. There are over 9,000 applications in the system, but not all have been submitted or have advisor approval. Please complete the application using the following steps:

1. Students – go to ffa.org and click the “scholarship” link. Click the “2009 Scholarship Application” to submit an application online
2. Advisors – go to ffa.org and click the “scholarship” link. Click the “2009 Scholarship Application” and log in with your assigned username and password to submit your electronic approval. Please email scholarships@ffa.org if you have not received your advisor username and password.
3. FFA members must log back into the application to print signature pages AFTER the advisor has submitted their electronic approval.
4. Applications must be submitted online by Feb. 17, 2009.
5. Required signature page must be postmarked no later than Feb. 23, 2009.

Judging Rubric Now Online

The judging rubric for the new 2009 Agri-Entrepreneurship application is now online at http://www.ffa.org/index.cfm?method=c_programs.AgEntrepreneurship. Award amounts have stayed the same for this program at \$150 for chapter winners, \$250 for state winners, and \$1,000 for each of 10

national winners. Any student with an entrepreneurial SAE should be urged to enter.

Million Hour Challenge

The Million Hour Challenge encourages members across the country to improve their communities through civic engagement. Project hours contributed by members and advisors are captured to provide recognition within FFA as well as in the communities themselves. Awards will be given during the 2009 National FFA Convention to the chapters with the greatest number of community service hours in the following categories—Environment, Government, Social/Human Service, Healthy Lifestyles and Education. Eligible project hours are those earned during the Oct. 2, 2008 to Oct. 1, 2009 period. Hours from all programs above are eligible for the Million Hour Challenge. Please remember, hours must be entered by advisors into the Million Hour Challenge database to earn credit. Million Hour Challenge is sponsored by Toyota as a special project of the National FFA Foundation. For more program information, contact the Million Hour Challenge office at mhc@ffa.org or 317-802-4413.

H.O. Sargent Awards Suspended for 2009

The National FFA Organization is suspending the H.O. Sargent Award program for 2009 in order to restructure that program to meet the needs of more students. In January, the FFA Awards and Recognition advisory board committee reviewed the H.O. Sargent awards. They recommended that the program be restructured, with a new objective and new application process, so that it might meet the needs of more participants. Given the current economic environment, and the fact that the H.O. Sargent Award program is currently without a sponsor (and has been unfunded for several years), the National FFA Organization has decided to suspend the program for 2009 in order to fast-track the program restructuring. For further information on the H.O. Sargent program, contact Aimee Wright, 317-802-4402 or awright@ffa.org.

News from the National FFA Alumni Association

The National FFA Alumni Association Task Force met in December. Below are a few examples of the recommendations being made to the leadership of National FFA Alumni Association and National FFA Organization:

1. Establish and proactively manage a more efficient process of marketing FFA alumni affiliates to agriculture educators.
2. Examine the current dues/fees structure and explore the feasibility of alternate fee structures, such as affiliate fees or membership levels.
3. Examine the affiliate structure to answer the question, "Does an FFA alumni affiliate have to be connected to an FFA chapter? Can it be a metro or regional group if no local affiliate exists?"
4. Evaluate the name/term "alumni." Is it too limiting in nature?

5. Build a database of former members and create a strategy for reconnecting.
6. Promote FFA alumni membership on both a national and local scale. Look “outside of the box” for ideas.

Full details of the alumni initiative can be found in the 2009 alumni update at www.ffa.org/alumni.

2009 National FFA Convention Update

Advisor’s Planning Guide – First Edition Online in April

Each April, FFA advisors know to expect the Advisor’s Planning Guide – First Edition (APG) in advance of the annual national FFA convention. This guide contains important housing and preliminary event information. The publication will be made available online only. During the next few weeks, you will see ListServ e-mails and other reminders guiding FFA advisors to the convention website on ffa.org, where all the APG information will be available beginning in mid-April. Also make a note: this August, the Advisors Planning Guide–Second Edition will be available online only; no print copies will be produced. For more details, contact Julie Woodard, jwoodard@ffa.org.

Housing

Housing for the 2009 National FFA Convention is now open. Advisors need to login to their MyFFA account to get the hotel listing. For more information, contact Ellen Williams at ewilliams@ffa.org.

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