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*Agricultural education as a part of a total teacher education program in vocational education located in a college of education will have more flexibility in requesting support from the vocational education divisions in state departments of education for teacher education.*

*Historically, teacher education in agriculture traces its origin to departments of agricultural education administratively located in colleges of agriculture . . . Rationale for such administrative structure was sound in the 1920's, and seems to be relevant for contemporary teacher education in agriculture.*

*Harold R. Binkley*

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**TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN AGRICULTURAL  
EDUCATION SHOULD BE LOCATED IN COLLEGES OF AGRICULTURE**

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The teacher education department in agricultural education should be located administratively in the college of agriculture. This position will be defended as the basic premise in this article solicited by the Editor of *The Journal*. The article is based upon the professional experiences and first-hand observations of the author over the past thirty years. Some readers may disagree with some of my statements. However, the purpose of debate is to discuss relevant issues and stimulate reflective thinking.

Historically, teacher education in agriculture traces its origin to departments of agricultural education administratively located in colleges of agriculture in most land-grant institutions and a few other prominent state universities. Most of these teacher education departments emerged in the 1920's, with the Smith-Hughes Vocational Education Act of 1917 providing funds expressly for the purpose of "teacher training" in agriculture, as well as home economics and trades and industry. Rationale for locating agricultural education in colleges of agriculture was sound in

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the 1920's and seems to be relevant for contemporary teacher education in agriculture today and for the immediate future.

About two-thirds of the agricultural education departments are administratively located in colleges of agriculture across the Nation. Some departments are administered jointly by deans from both colleges of agriculture and colleges of education. Some teacher education departments in agricultural education have experienced moves to colleges of education, and then have moved back into colleges of agriculture. The traditional organizational structure is based upon a history of success and satisfaction. Agricultural education has had a rich tradition of success, service, and satisfaction for more than fifty years in many state universities.

A major argument for locating agricultural education in the colleges of agriculture can be based upon the vocational interests of potential students. A recent study by Grimes (1966) of Texas A & M University found that agricultural education majors exhibited patterns of occupational interests very similar to those of majors in other agricultural fields. A later investigation comparing occupational interests between students in other colleges at Texas A & M University (1972) indicated that statistically significant differences existed between interests of college of agriculture and college of education undergraduates in six of ten inventory scales. Of particular interest is the fact that college of agriculture students and agricultural education majors indicated their highest interest to be in activities of an outdoor nature while the college of education majors ranked lower on this scale than any of the college groups compared. It would seem to follow that students in agricultural education are more likely to associate and feel most comfortable with students of similar interests. Indeed, it could be that identification with a group of similar interests may contribute much to relieve or reduce the degree of cultural trauma experienced by the young person during the early months following entry into a major university.

Most of the agricultural education departments with growing enrollments and comparatively higher enrollments are those closely affiliated with colleges of agriculture. Conversely, some of the departments of agricultural education separated from colleges of agriculture are experiencing decreasing enrollments. Universities are interested in attracting an adequate number of well-qualified students to various degree programs. Certainly this is true of universities responsible for teacher education programs in agriculture.

Those in professional roles in agricultural education are fully aware of the severe crisis facing the Nation with an inade-

quate supply of qualified vocational agriculture teachers. Job opportunities are bright for agricultural education graduates in professional roles in teaching, extension, agribusiness, and international programs. It is imperative that considerably more bright young men and women be recruited into agricultural education. It seems this can be best accomplished by attracting these students into departments closely aligned with colleges of agriculture.

Students enrolled in pre-service undergraduate curricula in agricultural education are required by state teacher certification laws and policy regulations to have a prescribed number of course hours in professional teacher education including student teaching, and a required number of hours of technical agriculture as a subject matter teaching field. Additional requirements beyond those imposed by state certification may be specified by any university. Pre-service undergraduate curricula in agricultural education reveal considerable variance in degree requirements. For example, some universities require as much as 40% of the degree program in technical agriculture; while others specify as little as 30% in technical agriculture. Some require as much as 25% in professional teacher education while others require as little as 14% of the degree program.

It is difficult to challenge the justification for a sound foundation in the subject matter teaching area and an equally solid foundation in professional teacher education. However, a study of the general trend reveals that agricultural education degree programs in colleges of agriculture will require more course hours in technical agriculture and less in professional teacher education when compared to agricultural education degree programs in colleges of education. In choosing philosophical alternatives, it would seem best to opt in favor of a stronger base in subject matter and a more modest base in teacher education courses. There is no research evidence indicating a curriculum requiring 30 semester hours of professional teacher education in the pre-service undergraduate degree program in agricultural education produces a better beginning teacher than one with 20 semester hours in this area.

Another argument for agricultural education to be administered in colleges of agriculture is based upon a history of access to research funds through the system of Agricultural Experiment Stations. Some agricultural education departments also have research and development projects funded by state departments of education. The departments of agricultural education with the stronger research components seem more likely to be in colleges of agriculture than in colleges of education.

*Agricultural Education for the Seventies and Beyond* (1971) was prepared for the American Vocational Association by a group of professionals who have distinguished themselves in leadership

roles in agriculture and agricultural education throughout the United States. It projects the best thinking of those in the profession, and should be of particular interest and importance in the areas of policy-making, planning, and leadership in agricultural education. This publication projects the future responsibilities of agricultural education:

*Future Responsibilities of the  
Agricultural Education Educator*

The increasing demand for a variety of agricultural educators places added responsibilities upon those responsible for preparing them. Identifying the needs for educational programs is in part up to agricultural faculties; the preparation of agricultural educators rests heavily with teacher educators. The accelerating pace of change will tax the vision and capabilities of both. In the past, teacher education programs have focused primarily upon preparing high school vocational agriculture teachers, but attention is now turning to the preparation of those who can serve in various programs, all the way from formal education in general agriculture at the elementary and high school levels to informal adult education.

The responsibilities of staff members in agricultural education will extend to encompass some functions not now regularly carried out. They will establish contact with a wide clientele. Regardless of the form that teacher education programs take, the underlying purpose is to develop understanding and an ability to design, implement and evaluate educational programs.

To meet their responsibilities, teacher educators need to design curricula for:

- High school teachers who will prepare youth for on-farm or off-farm employment in agriculture.
- Metropolitan high school teachers who will prepare youth for employment that requires specialized knowledge and skill in agriculture.
- Post-high school teachers who will prepare youth for paraprofessional positions in agricultural industries.

- Cooperative extension personnel to serve a broad spectrum of adult education needs in agriculture.
- Agricultural educators who will be entering international education programs.
- Agricultural educators to work in agribusiness--including sales, promotion and public relations.
- Elementary and secondary teachers of general agriculture.
- Agricultural educators to conduct adult education programs.
- Agricultural educators who have the specialized knowledge and skills needed to work with disadvantaged students.

If we accept the mandate of the profession to serve the broad spectrum of clientele as the responsibility of agricultural education as prescribed above, then it seems necessary to tie such programs very closely to colleges of agriculture. The primary emphasis is focused upon *agriculture* and *agricultural education*. Most departments of agricultural education across the Nation have accepted the responsibility for broadened preparation of agricultural educators for professional roles with cooperative extension, agribusiness, post-secondary education, international programs, as well as teaching. However, the primary focus still remains upon pre-service and in-service education of vocational agriculture teachers in public secondary schools.

The writer has accepted the specific assignment to present rationale *for* locating the department of agricultural education in colleges of agriculture. The reader should not interpret the arguments presented to imply teacher education in agriculture should be divorced from the college of education, nor should agricultural education be separated from any other viable coordinated teacher education administrative unit within the university. In fact, if given the choice of alternatives, the writer would opt for a closely coordinated interdisciplinary affiliation with the college of agriculture, and its subject matter departments in agricultural sciences, and also closely associated with the college of education and its professional teacher education departments. There are numerous examples of exemplary cooperative relationships in universities with the agricultural education departments heavily involved in interdisciplinary teacher education effort within colleges of agriculture and education. As a point of interest, such a compatible working relationship exists at Texas A & M University. Students and public education in agricultural education will be served best if this type of cooperative team effort in interdisciplinary education exists in a university.

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