SUGGESTIONS FOR HELPING POST-SECONDARY TEACHERS OF AGRICULTURE TO WORK WITH STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Maynard J. Iverson
Assistant Professor
Department of Vocational Education
University of Kentucky

Vincent J. Feck
Assistant Professor
Center for Career Education
Western Kentucky University

Recent literature on post-secondary programs in agriculture has focused upon student organizations, their role and the part teachers play in their functions. Many questions have been raised as to the form, activities and even the need for student clubs at this level. However, a national study[1] completed in 1971 indicates that we are beyond the stage of questioning the need for such groups.

Extent of Organizations

Of the 163 institutions surveyed, seventy per cent reported having agricultural student organizations with forty-three per cent of the student enrollment as members. Table 1 lists other major characteristics of the clubs and the percentages represented.

Table 1 indicates that student organizations are already a major presence in post-high school institutions. Although differing from high school and collegiate models, the clubs have many common characteristics. It appears that the clubs are growing in numbers and size. Just how successful the groups are in effectively improving program and student attainment will depend to a large part on the post-secondary teacher. What does he perceive his role to be in relation to such clubs? How well prepared is the average post-secondary teacher to deal with the realities of student organizations associated with subject matter areas?

Journal of the American Association of Teacher Educators in Agriculture
Volume 13, Number 3, pp. 9-21
DOI: 10.5032/jaatea.1972.03009

[1] Maynard J. Iverson, "Guidelines for the Development of Student Organizations Associated with Agricultural Programs at Two-Year Post-Secondary Educational Institutions in the United States," Ph. D. dissertation. Columbus: The Ohio State University, 1971.

TABLE 1

MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS[1] OF POST-SECONDARY AGRICULTURAL STUDENT CLUBS

Characteristic	Percent
Have faculty advisor (86 percent teachers)	96
Use school facilities	93
Operate under a constitution and by-laws	90
Students assume primary role in planning and operation	89
Name agriculturally-based	88
More than one-half of the membership active in one or more activity	87
Leadership and social development objectives	86
Hold social/recreational events and regular business meetings	84
The only ag student organization on campus	80
More than one-half the members continued into second year	80
Have elected officers; use committees and parliamentary procedure	80
Under ten years of age	75
Student orientation goals	74
Member dues a major source of income	74
Recreation and entertainment comprise major expenses	72
Little or no change since first organizing	64
Use no class time for activities	61
Fund-raising activities used	61
Started by students	60
Program assistance goals	59
Have guest speakers	58
Departmental in scope: open to any ag student	57
Have planned schedules of activities	56
Affiliated with no other group	55
Started by instructors	54
Modeled after social/recreational organizations	54
Take trips/tours	51

[1]As exhibited by over one-half of the respondents

Role Perceptions and Competency Levels of Post-Secondary, Agricultural Teachers

In a study of technical teachers of agriculture from 72 institutions throughout the United States,[2] it was found that 69 out of 149 teachers (46 percent) have responsibilities related to supervising student organization activities. Furthermore, these teachers spent an average of 2.3 hours per week performing such activities in addition to teaching responsibilities averaging 16.5 hours per week.

Thirty-two per cent of the 149 teachers indicated that they had vocational agriculture teaching experience for an average of just over eight years. Since youth organization activities have been an integral part of the vocational agriculture program, it can be assumed that those teachers have had some experience and competence in working with student organizations at the high school level. However, this does not automatically assure success or competence in working with student organizations at the post-secondary level.

Perceptions of Importance of Professional Education Competencies

Technical teachers of agriculture, administrators of agricultural technology programs, and state supervisors of vocational agriculture were asked to rate the importance of 117 professional education competencies for being or becoming a successful teacher in a two-year technical institute or college. One of the categories of competencies studies was "Student Organizations." These data are presented in Table 2. The technical teachers of agriculture were also asked to rate their degree of proficiency in each of the competencies. This information also appears in Table 2.

Table 2 data indicates that, in general, technical teachers of agriculture, administrators of agricultural technology programs, and state supervisors of vocational agriculture agree on the importance of most competencies listed under the category of "Student Organizations."

---

[2] Vincent J. Feck, "Characteristics and Professional Competency Needs of Teachers of Agriculture in Two-Year Technical Institutes or Colleges in the United States," Ph. D. Dissertation. Columbus: The Ohio State University, 1971.

TABLE 2

IMPORTANCE AND TEACHER PROFICIENCY IN COMPETENCIES ASSOCIATED WITH STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Importance Rating[1]				Competence Rating[2]
N=69	N=32	N-149		N=149
Adm.	Supervisors	Teachers		Teachers
3.30	3.07	3.27	Develop creative and initiative attributes within students	2.71
2.99	3.07	2.89	Promote interest in and assist in establishing a student organization	2.64
2.72	2.89	2.81	Assist in the development of an annual program of activities	2.46
2.78	2.85	2.72	Organize school and community support for a student organization	2.33
2.72	2.92	2.71	Conduct leadership development programs for organization officers	2.32
2.66	2.82	2.67	Assist in the development of constitution and bylaws of the organization	2.46
2.66	2.96	2.58	Maintain a student organization as an integral part of instruction	2.39
2.46	2.67	2.53	Organize competitive educational activities	2.37

[1]The scale used in rating the importance of competencies was: 1= little or importance, 2= some importance, 3 = above average importance, 4 = great importance.

[2]The scale used in rating degree of proficiency in competencies was 1 = little or not competence, 2 = some competence, 3 = above average competence, 4 = high degree of competence.

This data suggests that many teachers, and most administrators and supervisors perceive that successful technical teachers of agriculture need to possess above average proficiency in the competencies of developing creative and initiative attributes within students, and promoting interest in and assisting in establishing a student organization. Most respondents in the same groups -- with the exception of state supervisors -- perceived that technical teachers of agriculture need only some competence in organizing competitive educational activities and/or maintaining a student organization as an integral part of instruction.

Technical teachers of agriculture were also asked to indicate their in-service professional education needs. Thirty-four percent (51 out of 149) indicated a need for additional in-service meetings or workshops in the area of student organizations.

As might be anticipated, technical teachers of agriculture with vocational agriculture teaching experience rated the importance of and their degree of proficiency in competencies listed in the area of "Student Organizations" higher than teachers without this experience.

Conclusions and Recommendations

(1) A trend appears to be developing for the operation of student organizations associated with the agricultural offerings in two-year post-secondary institutions throughout the country. Although the emphasis, activities and goals vary, certain similarities and commonalities are apparent. An understanding of these attributes is especially important to the teachers who advise and otherwise work with such groups.

(2) Post-secondary teachers and administrators are in basic agreement on the importance of organizational skills to the success of the teachers of agriculture in a two-year, post-secondary setting. Most teachers feel that they have some ability in this aspect of their job but a desire and need for additional, in-service education on working with student groups is indicated.

(3) Teacher education programs to be revised to include courses designed for meeting the needs of current and prospective technical teachers of agriculture in the area of student organizations. A course outline might include the following topics: the role of student clubs in the post-secondary setting; principles and procedures in organizing a club; developing objectives; securing and maintaining membership; developing leadership; determining affiliation and coordinating with other groups; planning and organizing club activities; arranging for adequate finances; evaluating, and making needed improvements.

Additional research is needed to determine: the values and optimum uses for such clubs in the post-secondary institutions; the factors which are crucial to the success of clubs; means for increasing participation of students; methods in advising the group; and effective means to prepare teachers to advise post-secondary agricultural student organizations.

Agricultural teacher educators have the experience, skills, and knowledge needed to provide leadership in the research and teaching activities required to assist post-secondary teachers in doing an effective job with agricultural student clubs. Our challenge is to be aware and to act.

* * * * * * * *

A COMPARISON OF ATTITUDE AND SELECTED INFORMATION AMONG MEMBERS OF THE INDIANA YOUNG FARMERS' ASSOCIATION, VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE YOUNG FARMER CLASSES, AND YOUNG FARMERS NOT PARTICIPATING IN EITHER GROUP

Dewey W. Stewart
Chief Consultant Agri-Bus. Educ.
Vocational Division
Department of Public Instruction

Ralph G. Field
Assistant Professor
Agriculture Education
Purdue University

Many farmers experience an educational and leadership gap after leaving the Future Farmers of America organization. An adult organization can fill the gap and offer advantages that the young farmer might not otherwise experience.[1] Two tools that are used to bring young farmers together on common ground to discuss their problems and their ideals are the Indiana Young Farmers' Association and the vocational agriculture young farmer classes.

Organized instruction is needed for those individuals trying to get established in an agricultural occupation.[2] Agriculture is a rapidly changing industry. A knowledge of economic conditions throughout the world and of new discoveries in all phases of agriculture are important in making decisions affecting the individual's business. Teachers of agriculture plan programs of organized instruction which meet the needs of the group. These programs are to provide technical knowledge, skills, and abilities that will improve the competencies of the adult agricultural work force.

The Problem

This study was designed to compare the attitude and selected information among the members of the Indiana Young Farmers' Association, vocational agriculture young farmer classes and young farmers not participating in either group.

The Samples

The samples of this study were composed of two hundred individuals randomly selected to participate in each group of this study. The results of the study were based upon the completion and return of the instrument by eighty-four members of the Indiana Young Farmers' Association, one hundred six members of the vocational agriculture young farmer classes, and eighty-six young farmers not participating in either group.

Members of the Indiana Young Farmers' Association. Each individual who had paid his dues by November 10, 1971, and who was listed on the official membership roster was numbered from 1 to 383 and through the use of a table of random numbers, 200 individuals were identified to form the sample for the sample.

Young Farmers Not Participating in Either Group. Each name that was sent in before November 10, 1971, by the local agri-business instructors was given a number from 1 to 461 and through the use of a table of random numbers, 200 individuals were identified to form the sample for the study.

The Instruments

Measurement of family status, economic background and future objectives were obtained using the personal data information form prepared by the principal investigator. Educational attitude was obtained by using the Minnesota Farm Family opinion inventory. The measurement of the concepts of rural family life, rural community leaders, and myself, the young farmer, was obtained using the semantic differential.

Instrument Administration

A letter including the instruments was sent on November 15, 1971, to all individuals selected to participate in this study asking for their cooperation. A follow-up letter was sent on December 9, 1971, to all individuals who had not completed and returned the instrument asking for additional cooperation in the study. A third and final letter was sent along with another copy of the instrument on December 22, 1971, to all individuals who had not completed and returned the instrument asking for help again.

Results

The results of this study were reported as mean scores and significant levels on the characteristics of the Personal Data Information Form, mean scores on the Minnesota Farm Family Inventory Educational Attitude and Semantic Differential, F-ratio and probability levels as calculated by analysis of variance of the Minnesota Farm Family Inventory Educational Attitude and Semantic Differential, and results of the Newman-Keuls Sequential Range Test to locate the position of significant difference (p .05, p .01), on those scales of the Minnesota Farm Family Inventory Educational Attitude and items of the Semantic Differential where the probability was .10 or less (p .10) as indicated by analysis of variance.

Tables 1, 2, and 3 present the Newman-Keuls Sequential Range Test to determine the location of the significance (p .01, p .05) among the comparison groups that was shown to be less than ten percent by analysis of variance. The Newman-Keuls Sequential Range Test is a conservative test. This accounts for the fact that some scales and items were shown significant (p .10) by analysis of variance, but were not shown significant (p .05, p .01) by this test.

The scales that indicated a significant difference are: (2) I am very satisfied with the school in my community, (7) college education should be free to all who want it and can qualify, (16) all people, whether or not they have children in school, should be taxed for education, (19) it would be a poor idea to join together school districts so none would have fewer than 1500 students, and (21) well-educated youngsters get good jobs and leave the local community.

Summary

The study indicated that there were statistically significant differences (p .05 or less) in favor of the members of the Indiana Young Farmers' Association when compared with members of the vocational agriculture young farmer classes on 7 of 151 items on the instruments. These seven items were: 1. years of education which the head of household has completed; 2. number of organizations in which they participated; 3. labor and management income for 1970; 4. I am very satisfied with the school in my community; 5. sociable-unsociable on the concept of Rural Family Life; 6. aggressive-defensive on the concept of myself; and 7. competitive-cooperative on the concept of myself. Of the 151 items, the following 2 were statistically significant (p .05 or less) in favor of the members of the vocational agriculture young farmer classes: 1. employment objectives five years from now, and 2. all people, whether or not they have children in school, should be taxed for education.

TABLE 1

NEWMAN-KEULS SEQUENTIAL RANGE TEST (q) TO DETERMINE LOCATION OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE (p . 05) ON SCALES OF THE MINNESOTA FARM FAMILY OPINION INVENTORY EDUCATIONAL ATTITUDE BY COMPARISON GROUP

		q by Comparison Group[1]		
Scale	ANoVA Level	A vs C	A vs B	B vs C
2	0.060	0.222	0.411[2]	0.189
7	0.002	0.501[3]	0.020	0.521[3]
16	0.054	0.430	0.371[2]	0.229
19	0.011	0.513[2]	0.204	0.309
21	0.082	0.290	0.296	0.005

[1]X Groups are identified as: (A) Members of the Indiana Young Farmers' Association, (B) Members of the Vocational Agriculture Young Farmer classes, and (C) Young farmers not participating in either group.

[2]Significant at . 05 level

[3]Significant at . 01 level

TABLE 2

NEWMAN-KEULS SEQUENTIAL RANGE TEST (q) TO DETERMINE LOCATION OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE (p .05) ON ITEMS OF THE RURAL FAMILY LIFE CONCEPT BY COMPARISON GROUP

Item	ANoVA Level	q by Comparison Group[1] A vs C	A vs B	B vs C
7 (Happy-sad)	0.088	0.330[3]	0.066[2]	0.264
9 (Sociable-unsociable)	0.066	0.655[3]	0.494[2]	0.162
13 (Successful-unsuccessful)	0.020	0.516[2]	0.327	0.189
19 (Active-passive)	0.034	0.358	0.039	0.319
25 (Aggressive-defensive)	0.068	0.409	0.020	0.429
31 (Thrifty-generous)	0.096	0.163	0.346	0.183

[1]Groups are identified as: (A) Members of the Indiana Young Farmers' Association, (B) Members of the Vocational Agriculture Young Farmers classes, and (C) Young farmers not participating in either group.

[2]Significant at .05 level

[3]Significant at .01 level

TABLE 3

NEWMAN-KEULS SEQUENTIAL RANGE TEST (q) TO DETERMINE LOCATION OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE (p .05) ON ITEMS OF THE MYSELF CONCEPT BY COMPARISON GROUP

	ANoVA Level	q by Comparison Group[1] A vs C	A vs B	B vs C
2 (Beautiful-ugly)	0.084	0.300	0.011	0.311
22 (Colorful-colorless	0.059	0.172	0.234	0.406[2]
25 (aggressive-defensive)	0.053	0.204	0.456[2]	0.252
26 (Competitive-cooperative)	0.010	0.080	0.648	0.568[2]
27 (Sophisticated-naive)	0.082	0.266	0.112	0.378

[1]Groups are identified as: (A) Members of the Indiana Young Farmers' Association, (B) Members of the Vocational Agriculture Young Farmers classes, and (C) Young farmers not participating in either group.

[2]Significant at .05 level

Summary (Cont'd)

The study further indicated that there were statistically significant differences at the selected level (p .05 or less) in favor of the members of the Indiana Young Farmers' Association on 12 of the 151 items when compared to young farmers not participating in either group. These 12 items were; 1. age, 2. marital status, 3. number of children, 4. years of education which the wife has completed, 5. number of years attending adult evening classes, 6. number of adult education classes attended this past year, 7. number of organizations in which they participated, 8. labor and management income for 1970, 9. total farm sales for 1970, 10. it would be a poor idea to join together school districts so none would have fewer than 1500 students, 11. sociable-unsociable on the concept of Rural Family Life, and 12. successful-unsuccessful on the concept of Rural Family Life.

Only one item, college education should be free to all who want it and can qualify, was statistically significant (p .05 or less) in favor of the young farmers not participating in either group when compared with members of the Indiana Young Farmers' Association.

It was also indicated that there was statistically significant differences (p .05 or less) in favor of members of the vocational agriculture young farmer classes when compared with young farmers not participating in either group on 10 items. These ten items were: (1) age, (2) marital status, (3) number of children, (4) years of education which the wife has completed, (5) number of years attending this past year, (7) labor and management income for 1970, (8) total farm sales for 1970, (9) total capital invested, and (10) employment objectives five years from now.

The following four items were statistically significant in favor of the young farmers not participating in either group: (1) years of education which the head of household has completed, (2) college education should be free to all who want it and can qualify, (3) colorful-colorless on the concept of myself, and (4) competitive-cooperative on the concept of myself.

As a result of this study, it is evident that several aspects of the young farmer program could be illuminated by a study directed toward their resolvement. Some of these aspects are: (1) an in-depth study of the economic factors affecting all young farmers, (2) a comparative study of those individuals who attend the Indiana Young Farmers' Association annual conference as compared to those young farmers who completed this study, (3) a longitudinal study of the individuals participating in this study on the same items of this study, (4) a comparative study of those individuals who hold executive positions in the vocational agriculture young farmer classes as compared to those young farmers who completed this study, and (5) a comparative study among those instructors who work with local chapters of the Indiana Young Farmers' Association, instructors who teach vocational agriculture adult and/or young farmer classes, and instructors who have neither a local young farmer chapter or adult and/or young farmer classes.

Implications

The following implications were drawn from the study:

(1) There is a need for every school corporation with post-high school students who are engaged in agri-business employment to offer vocational agriculture young farmer classes.

(2) There is a need for every school corporation offering vocational agriculture young farmer classes to encourage the class members to become members of the Indiana Young Farmers' Association.

(3) There is a need for every agri-business department to survey its community to determine the needs of all young farmers.

(4) The members of the Indiana Young Farmers' Association are more efficient in farm management.

(5) The vocational agri-business programs in Indiana are not meeting the needs of the younger individuals who are engaged in an agri-business occupation.

References

1. Gentry, D. K. Personal Interview, March 13, 1972.

2. Juergenson, E. M. "Young Farmers: A Dilemma; A New Direction," Agriculture Education, 41:304-5, June, 1969.

3. Kittleson, Howard M. Attitudes Toward Enterpreneurial Behavior and Education--Their Relationship to Instruction, St. Paul University of Minnesota, 1969.

4. Nichols, Mark Young Farmers: Their Problems, Activities, and Educational Program. Danville: The Interstate, 1952.

5. Yeaths, A. L. "Virginia's State-wide Young Farmer Program," Agriculture Education, 35:65-66, October, 1962.

* * * * * *