



West Virginia

AGED NEWS and VIEWS

Published by
West Virginia University's Agricultural and Extension Education Department

January - February 2006

Harry N. Boone, Jr., Ph.D., Editor

Creative Supervised Experience Programs -- High Tunnel Greenhouses

by Kellen McNutt

Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could tap into a market where you were the sole provider of the product? No one could compete against you and the profit would be substantial. This maybe a dream for most farmers and producers, but it can be a reality.

A simple way to capture this "open" market is to expand a product's regular growing season to produce earlier and later within the season. This can be attained through high tunnel production. A high tunnel or "hoop house" is very similar to a simple greenhouse structure, except a high tunnel is unheated.

A high tunnel works by artificially warming up the soil allowing planting to occur within the tunnel 3-4 weeks prior to the regular planting season. The plants are grown directly in the soil, and at the same time, they are protected from temperature and water fluctuations, light frost, wind, or even insects, disease and predators. The constant cover of the high tunnel requires some type of irrigation system for the plants. Overhead or ground irrigation will be necessary for the crop, as well as, a floor covering for heat retention and weed prevention. These coverings may include mulch or a black plastic covering on the floor.

Now that we have some background on what a high tunnel is, who can utilize one? Any student that is thinking about growing a garden or other crops may consider using a high tunnel to help give them an edge on the out-of-season market. For a student that

is venturing into the possibilities of a Supervised Agricultural Experience, their background and prior knowledge will determine the type of crops grown in a high tunnel. If a student doesn't know much about plant management and production, then they should start with a simple crop that is more forgiving. Some examples include lettuce, radishes, turnips, cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower. These crops also have a very fast turn around to allow for multiple crop production. Other crops including tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and strawberries can be grown in the high tunnel when more risk can be taken. Students will quickly gain knowledge about high tunnels, the crops they can grow, and the market.

Some precautions need to be taken with the high tunnel. Although the tunnel should keep the inside at least 5 degrees warmer than the outside, there is still a chance that the crop could get too cold. Therefore, a back up heater should be kept in the tunnel to ensure the safety of your crop. Another factor the student needs to evaluate is locating a market for the produce. Farmer's markets, grocery stores, or even a roadside stand are all possibilities for their retail outlet. The market should be found prior to the establishment of the high tunnel. This market should be relatively easy to find because competition is limited.

Now for the questions, how much is a high tunnel going to cost and can it truly be

profitable. The entire high tunnel unit is intended to require a limited capital investment. The cost of a high tunnel can range from \$500 dollars to over \$4,000 for a 20' x 96' structure; this includes the cover and irrigation. The materials making up the high tunnel can range from rough cut lumber for the base, plastic pipe for the hoops, t-tape drip irrigation, and a frost cover; to pressure treated lumber, metal bows, purlins, roll-up sides, automated irrigation, and 6-mil greenhouse plastic. The simple and cheap structure may not be the most comfortable to work in and may not last more than 2-3 years, but it provides a great start with better profit margins. Once funds are established, the facility can get a face lift inside and out to increase quality, quantity, and efficiency.

A high tunnel may not make it on a "Get Rich Quick" top ten list but it can definitely help a student learn, take responsibility and even make money. The out-of-season market allows the student to increase profits, while the controlled environment allows for a better quality product. The next time you are in a market place and there is a crop of fresh grown produce that isn't quite in season yet, you will know that someone out there is taking advantage of this lucrative reality.

Kellen McNutt is a student in Agricultural and Extension Education at West Virginia University. She was a member of the Roane County (WV) FFA Chapter. Her high school agricultural teachers were Paul Cummings, Jim Workman, and Russell Moore.

Note from the Editor:

Supervised experience programs (SAEs) are the cornerstone of today's high school agricultural education programs. The concept can be traced to the turn of the 20th century and Rufus Stimson's home project concept. As agriculture changed, supervised experience programs evolved to meet students' needs. Off-farm placement and research SAEs are two examples. With fewer students coming from a production agriculture background, many teachers struggle with the concept of involving all students in an experiential learning situation. To create some discussion on this issue, I asked agricultural education teachers, high school students, and undergraduates at West Virginia University to write an article for *News and Views* on a "creative" SAE. This issue contains some of the responses.

Creative SAEs -- Learn How to Milk a Cow

by Julie Roop

An exciting event for young children is planning activities for their birthday parties. When I was young I remember attending birthday parties themed around princesses, summer fun, super heroes, amusement parks, restaurants, or the latest movie. Considering how popular themed birthday parties are for children, why not provide an educational experience for a child that incorporates a fun approach to agriculture. The SAE that I have developed would include providing birthday party entertainment in the form of agricultural education. This SAE will involve making a miniature cow out of plywood. The cow will be made so that children can milk it. The agricultural student will make this device and take it to various birthday parties and events and teach children how to milk cows. Along with teaching the children how to milk cows, the student will also give a presentation on milk and its value. The student will develop a program for the children that may involve activities such as making ice cream or butter to go along with milking the cow and the oral presentation.

The first step in getting involved in this SAE would be to learn the agricultural mechanics skills necessary to make plywood cut outs. The best place for this learning to take place is in the classroom or laboratory. In class students will be taught how to use different types of saws. They will design and

cut two identical pieces of plywood. They would then use foot long 2x4s to put the two cow cutouts together. A 5-gallon bucket can be used to make the udder of the cow. By cutting 4 holes in the bottom of the bucket 4 calf-bottle nipples can be placed in the bucket to act as the teats. The bucket can be constructed to fit between the two pieces of plywood. The plywood should be painted to resemble a cow. Mix water with white dye to form a milk substance. This will be placed in the bucket and will act as the milk. When children pull on the teats of the bucket this milk substance will come out and they will be "milking" a cow. After the device is made the student can develop a presentation on the importance of milk as well as plan other activities for the children at the birthday party like making ice cream or butter.

Not only will this project be an educational experience for the children, but one for the agricultural student as well. The student will have to learn marketing skills in order to sell their services to the public. They will have to research information on the dairy industry in order to answer questions from the children and parents. They must use classroom experiences from the agricultural mechanics laboratory in order to construct the cow. This idea may lead to more ideas for students to teach agriculture in a fun approach. They may take their service to the

local elementary school and as a community service project, allow students to participate in the same activities. They could also develop different ideas to provide services at birthday parties. Some of these ideas might include offering face painting, pony rides, a petting zoo, and more.

To get started on this SAE, the student will have to spend about \$150, for 2 pieces of plywood, 2x4s, calf-bottle nipples, and a bucket. Other costs may include supplies for ice cream or butter demonstrations and travel expenses.

The agricultural student will make money by charging a fee for the rent of the cow and a fee for every child at the party. I think \$10 per child is a reasonable fee. The price that the student charges should be enough to pay for materials, and at the same time making them extra cash to put towards their degree programs. I would like to see birthday parties where children can learn something as exciting as milking a cow. This type of SAE is sure to get the word out about agriculture, will provide money for the student, and most importantly will be a learning experience starting at the classroom and continuing to the real world.

Julie Roop is a student in Agricultural and Extension Education at West Virginia University. She was a member of the Catoctin High School (MD) FFA Chapter. Her high school agricultural teacher was Robert Beavan.

Creative SAEs -- Diversified Forest Products

by Joseph T. Hymes

Agriculture can be found in every part of this country, but have we looked and examined every part of our own farm? West Virginia is blessed with natural resources. Occasionally, we must look outside of the box to take advantage of the possibilities for an educational, creative, profitable, and sustainable Supervised Agricultural Experience for our students to explore.

Diversified forest products "lifts the lid" on the box of traditional forest products of lumber and pulp. It takes advantage of specialty crops and medicinal herbs that naturally grow in the forest. Items such as ramps (*Allium tricoccum*), which have been introduced to the menus of high-end urban restaurants, and shiitake mushrooms (*Lentinus edodes*), which have been a staple of many Asian diets for centuries, are two examples of specialty food crops that demand high market prices. Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) can sell for \$300/dried pound

and Goldenseal (*Hydrastis Canadensis*) has reached market prices of \$100/dried pound. These are common herbs used in tea as remedies for common illnesses. The scarcity of these herbs in their natural varieties has produced a large demand for cultivated types.

Such demand, has introduced the possibility of a student being able to take the idea of cultivating a niche product for a specialty market. The cultivation of these crops and herbs will not only teach students practical skills, but also the marketing skills needed to find customers and sell their product. While a SAE of this type may require a substantial amount of investment in the beginning, the return in three to five years should be quite substantial. According to Scott Persons (*American Ginseng: Green Gold*, 1994), a start up cost of \$1440 (excluding labor) for one half acre of ginseng will produce an average of 80 pounds of dried ginseng in nine years netting a return of \$22,000.

I believe that the idea of diversified forest products can also bring an exciting lesson to a classroom forestry unit. While mushrooms, ramps, ginseng, and goldenseal are not often thought of as agricultural crops, students will be able to see that the world market for agricultural products consists of more than meats, vegetables, and grains.

You will encounter a student at some point who does not have prime farm land but may own a large woodlot or forest that can produce an "outside of the box" product that demands a "lift the lid" approach. Encourage your students to be creative and utilize the resources that they are given to produce an educational and profitable SAE.

Joseph Hymes is a student in Agricultural and Extension Education at West Virginia University. He was a member of the Barbour County (WV) FFA Chapter. His high school agricultural teacher was Gene Hovatter.

Creative SAEs -- Fishbait

by Matthew Thornton

Raising and selling worms and baitfish to fisherman would prove to be a productive learning experience as well as provide a financial return to the owner. Fishing is a fairly large recreational activity in West Virginia as well as many other states across the nation. With a large number of fishermen, there is a need for bait. This entrepreneurial venture, if developed correctly, would be a wonderful learning experience for students and will provide a significant monetary return.

Raising worms and baitfish as an SAE would be a fairly easy operation for beginning students to get involved. It could start out on a small level, maybe just with worms, then easily progress into a larger more productive business. Becoming established in worm sales and production is an SAE which may not require a large start up cost. Worms naturally occur in most soils. Producing enough worms to begin a business would depend only on the amount of time the entrepreneur invested. After a rainstorm, night crawlers naturally come out of their burrows due to flooding. This is an opportune time to establish an inventory. The only thing a student really would need to get started is a plot of land from which to harvest worms. Areas such as local golf courses are a prime area to harvest worms. A golf course's main concern is the quality of the grass. To keep the grass quality high, the greens are irrigated on a daily basis which mimics a soaking rain, thus flooding out the worms. If a student were to establish an agreement with local courses, the business will have a chance to flourish. Many course owners are willing to work with students. There will be no digging involved in this

stage of worming; only harvesting ones which have risen to the surface to avoid drowning. If this type of relationship were developed the student would probably be able to begin their business without ever purchasing one worm. This type of operation may be worthy for a small neighborhood bait stand or shop, but what if the student wishes to become involved in a much larger operation?

If the student decides to produce and sell worms on a much larger scale, then he or she might want to look into actually growing worms. Red worms (*Lumbricus rubellus*) are commonly used in worm production because of their prolific rate of reproduction. Young worms are able to reproduce rapidly and will reproduce approximately one month after birth. This fast rate of reproduction will provide the student with an inventory which will grow at an extremely fast rate. A proper worm growing facility can consist merely of a plot of soil which is surrounded on four sides and the bottom so that the worms are not able to escape. Within this area about four to five pounds of worms may exist in every square foot. To further illustrate, approximately 500 red worms constitute one pound. So theoretically, if a student were to have a twenty square foot worm plot, there is a potential for upwards of 40,000 worms to exist in that space. When sold by the dozen for two dollars, the monetary return will prove to be worthy of the time and effort invested.

Raising baitfish could go hand-in-hand with worms and prove to be profitable as well. In baitfish production students will have the opportunity to learn the different

aspects of raising baitfish. They will need a tank or facility in which to raise the fish, aerators, nutrients, and of course fish to begin the breeding process. Once the baitfish production has begun, the student's focus will be to maintain inventory, and increase reproduction. Selling both worms and baitfish will provide a reasonable monetary return for students. If established correctly, students may be able to sell night crawlers or red worms for upwards of two dollars per dozen without ever purchasing a single worm. As for baitfish, a larger start up cost will be necessary, but a sufficient return will also be possible. Items such as a tank, feed, nutrients, and chemicals will be necessary to maintain a healthy facility, but this expense should be covered within the first year of sales.

Raising worms and baitfish as an SAE will be an excellent learning experience for students as well as provide them with a monetary return which will attract them back to the program the following year. While involved in such an activity, the students will be gaining knowledge in human resources, various marketing activities involved with selling the products, and a number of managerial aspects of a business. The student will be responsible for keeping records for the SAE as well as cash flow statements and various other business sheets. In addition to the business statements, students will be involved in making decisions which affect the outcome of their SAE. All of the skills developed during this venture will prove to be helpful during school as well as in the years to follow.

Matthew Thornton is a student in Agricultural and Extension Education at West Virginia University. He attended Owen J. Roberts High School (PA).

Creative SAEs -- Agricultural Journalism

by Sarah Lewis

When asked by a freshman agriculture student what is a SAE, one would respond by saying something along the lines of it's a great way to get credit and FFA awards by doing things like exploring careers and making money. I could even explain that it is a practical way to apply classroom concepts, which are designed to provide experience needed to succeed in the real world. However, when a student starts to plan their SAE, what ideas would you want to place in their hands? How would you help your students that have no agricultural experience to plan their SAE?

As the new wave of agriculture spreads, new SAEs start to emerge. Agricultural journalism should be recognized as one of the new and effective SAEs. Agricultural journalism allows students with no past agricultural experience to learn about methods and procedures which are prominent in agricultural life. They learn first hand by observing and documenting the actions of others. They can write articles for the newspaper, chapter newsletters, or even market spots for their local radio. Agricultural journalism gives the student the opportunity to visit local markets to document sales on products which many local farmers produce. This in turn provides use-

ful information for the marketability of crops. They will also have the ability to visit local stock sales and report on recent market prices and trends. By being the voice of their chapter, they have the ability to recognize others accomplishments and provide media attention to many over looked activities within their chapter and community. They may also be able to create a newsletter that would be sent annually to each member. They can also work with their local radio station to report on upcoming activities. By preparing a newsletter, they have the ability to enlighten each student, parent or community member about the won-

(continued on page 4)

Agricultural Journalism (continued)

derful efforts the FFA makes to improve their community and world. By providing this SAE as a possibility for students that have no agricultural background you will be enlightening a future journalist and creating a voice for the FFA.

Although they will not be making money or profit from their effort, they will create a meaningful SAE that will be recognized for its importance. Agricultural journalism should be placed at the top of a much needed list of new and effective SAEs.

Sarah Lewis is a student in Agricultural and Extension Education at West Virginia University. She was a member of the Mineral County (WV) FFA Chapter. Her high school agricultural teachers were Carol Webb, Robert Knotts, Charles DeBerry, and John Ritchie.

Creative SAEs -- Rent-a-Goat

by Jeremy Kelly

Through careful advertisement and strategic business agreements the "rent a goat" SAE could bring a student the State FFA degree. Many times people avoid mowing steep banks and water ways, but this leaves ugly spots on their properties. That is where you step in and offer a goat to clean up these areas. Many people do not want to buy a goat due to the cost of sheltering them in the winter or the hay that they have to buy. If they were to rent a goat then they would not have to worry about these concerns.

Not only does this SAE open a wide range of communications between the student and the community but it also teaches them responsibilities in the management of a business. It teaches them about the care of the animals as well as supply and demand. If they have too many goats they will need to cut back, while on the other hand if they don't have enough animals they will need to broaden their scope.

This SAE is nearly fool proof. Goats are great at foraging, and besides the shots

to keep them healthy, a small amount of grain, and transportation; there are few expenses. Students can charge different fees. If the student has to visit the farm each day to water, move the animals to a new place, and feed them grain, the rent on that animal will be more. Compare this to a situation where the farmer takes care of everything and the only thing the student worries about is the delivery of the animals.

This seems easy but the student will have to understand key concepts in goat production and provide for the care of the animals after the summer ends? Is it practical to purchase new goats each spring? Students should be encouraged to keep pregnant does during the winter months and rent the kids in spring because they are fast growers. The students will also have to communicate with the customer to make an analysis of which breed and sex of goats are preferred.

The student will have to select breeding stock and understand genetics and he-

redity. Goats that are rude and mean are going to be less desirable and thus students should promote reproduction in the more likeable animals. Students will have to train the goats to stay on leashes and chains and select animals that are good-natured and naturally quiet.

Fees for the "rent-a-goats" have several options. One is to rent by the acre. This is a good idea if the person has a fenced in area that will hold a goat. If the customer wants an acre cleaned the student could charge \$100 and bring in 20 goats and accomplish the task in a short time. The student could also market the goats individually, renting them by the day. The student could charge \$5 a day for one goat. In one week the student can earn \$35, the market value for a small goat. In one week the student has earned his/her initial investment.

Jeremy Kelly is a student in Agricultural and Extension Education at West Virginia University. He was a member of the Waynesburg (PA) FFA Chapter. His high school agricultural teacher was Robert Born.

Creative SAEs -- Bonsai Trees

by April D. Mallow

My idea for a creative supervised agricultural experience program is one that my high school agriculture teacher and I developed while I was still in high school. My idea is for the student to have a bonsai tree operation. The art of bonsai cutting is something that many people use as a relaxation tool. As you know, there is a need for stress relief in today's society. Bonsai trees can produce an excellent income for the student. In addition to the sale of trees, the student could offer classes on the art of trimming and cultivating trees. The classes would generate income, advertise the business and expand the local market by raising awareness of the hobby.

A bonsai tree operation can be very profitable because of the reputation and prestige the art has gained over the years. On average these trees sell for about \$30.00 per tree.

Selling 10 trees would bring in \$300; however, the operation will have its expenses. The student will have to develop a presence in the local market through local advertising. To maximize profits, the student must think broader. I would encourage the student to make his/her products available via an Internet website. I would also encourage the student to research the operation's target audience and market directly to them. In my experience, I think that if clients understand the student's connection to the FFA, they are more likely to buy because they enjoy helping young people succeed. They are also impressed by a young person's drive.

I believe that this supervised agriculture experience program will teach the student many life skills. It will help the student with communication and networking skills. It will teach the student the value of money, how to

earn it, and how to keep track of the business transactions. The student will also have the opportunity to learn management, record keeping, and decision making skills. This SAE also provides the student with an opportunity to make money. This SAE can also be expanded to include other ornamentals besides just bonsai trees.

I feel that this SAE meets all the criteria for a good SAE. It has the potential to become a full-time career after high school. A bonsai tree operation would be a worthwhile investment for a student to consider as their supervised agricultural experience program.

April Mallow is a student in Agricultural and Extension Education at West Virginia University. She was a member of the Pendleton County (WV) FFA Chapter. Her high school agricultural teacher was Ronald Hudson.

Creative SAEs -- Hunting Dogs

by Justin Whitacre

Raising, selling, and breeding hunting dogs is a major outdoor activity. Although it could take years to take a hound from a puppy to a top notch hunting dog there is money to be made in the “dog business.” My suggestion to a first year agriculture student that wants to have hunting dogs as a SAE is to buy a dog that has already started its training program or perhaps a finished dog would be better. If your goal is to make money you should buy a registered dog instead of a grade dog. People will pay for the bloodline as well as the ability of the hound. A student could purchase a hound from local or national breeders. Average dogs are easy to find but a good hound can be difficult.

Once the student buys a hound it is time to establish a reputation. This can be done by going to competition hunts or just hunting with different people to demonstrate how you handle your hound and how the dog performs. The better the hound performs the faster your reputation will spread.

With hounds there are a number of skills to be learned. First of all and most impor-

tantly is the responsibility of taking care of the animal. The better the animal is treated the easier it is to handle. Also the more time spent with the hound, whether in the woods or just in the backyard, the more trust the animal will have in you and the more trust you will have in its abilities. Secondly, the student will need to know how to build facilities for the hound. This includes facilities for both the hound’s shelter and for transportation on or in a vehicle. The student may also need to build a breeding kennel.

The student will develop good time management skills. The student will need to set time aside to hunt the hound and time for other things such as school work. The student will also learn people skills dealing with other hunters and land owners.

There is a lot of money to be made with hounds. If the student has a good bloodline there will be a demand for the puppies. Puppies can sell between \$50 and \$300 each. A lot of hunters don’t own a male dog. When they want their females bred they use artificial

insemination or pay for stud services. If the student had a good male dog, people are willing to pay for their dog’s services. Stud fees can range from \$100 to \$400. The student can also raise and sell finished dogs. Earnings will depend on the type of game the dog is trained to hunt. In the state of West Virginia individuals can hunt their dogs year round. A student could train and hunt other hunters’ dogs and get paid for it. Depending on the amount of time the student hunts the dog, they could earn as much as \$1500 a month.

Overall hunting dogs would be a great SAE if the student started out with dogs that were already trained. The SAE will teach students responsibility and respect for animals and people. There is the potential for the student to earn a great deal of money from the business venture.

Justin Whitacre is a student in Agricultural and Extension Education at West Virginia University. He was a member of the Hampshire County (WV) FFA Chapter. His high school agricultural teachers were Paul Roomsburg, Bill Chainey, and Ronnie Watson.

Creative SAEs -- Stepping Outside the Barn Yard

by Ashley Watts

Agriculture has a reputation for being able to change with the times, but still uphold its roots, traditions, and foundation. Thinking back on when FFA and its mission first started, it has certainly come a long way. Things have changed, and supervised agricultural experience programs are no different. A lot of things can get you ahead in life. Everyone is looking for a leader, someone who is well rounded, understanding, and has the ability to take control. Having a creative mind and being able to utilize it to the fullest extent possible is important. The agriculture program is realizing that to help students reach their utmost potential, it needs to get into the minds of its students, clean out the cob webs, and get their brains in gear. This is where creative SAEs come into play. Creative SAEs challenge our students to step outside the barnyard and create new ways to earn money.

A creative SAE that interests me is growing mushrooms. A student could grow a plethora of different types of mushrooms including Artist Conk, Reishi or Lingshi, Maitake or Hen of the Woods, Conifer Coral mushroom, Lion’s Mane, Shiitake, Pearl Oyster, Phoenix Fir Oyster, and Chicken of the Woods. The types of mushrooms listed

above are for stump and log cultivations. These mushrooms come from the company in plugs with the mycelium (feed) already intact.

To prepare these mushrooms, the student must keep the plugs away from direct sunlight for a week. This is because the plugs may have collapsed from the shipping and handling process. The plugs should not be opened until they are ready to be grown. They can be stored at room temperature for up to two months and can be refrigerated if they are not being used. However, mushrooms could start to grow in the refrigerator.

A necessary item one needs to start growing mushrooms is logs. The types of logs are important. Each mushroom prefers a certain type of wood. For example, plugs prefer hard woods like oak, eucalyptus, and elm. If you are using a stump for your mushrooms, then maple and cherry are good choices. Thick barked woods are preferred over thin barked woods. The condition of the logs is just as important as the condition of the plugs. Things that need to be taken into consideration include when the trees should be cut, if the logs need to be stripped of any fungus presently on the surface, how long the logs should be, and how many plugs can fit into one log. Usually, a three

to four foot log will hold fifty or more plugs. A stump can hold thirty to forty plugs. Holes can be sealed with cheese wax or bees wax to help increase yield. The logs should be stacked in crisscross shapes to conserve moisture. At initial cropping, water two to three times a day for one week, then soak for twenty four hours. After that, you can watch your mushrooms start to grow. They should be ready to be harvested in one month. These same plugs should be good for two to three years. Total cost to get started is estimated at around \$500. Total income for one crop yielding 6,000 plugs is around \$800-\$1000 minimum.

I found this SAE to be unique because the student will be using different techniques to grow their mushrooms. The student does not even need soil. I like this idea because the student will essentially be using forestry as a way to grow their crops. It is a different way of thinking compared to the traditional way of planting.

Ashley Watts is a student in Agricultural and Extension Education at West Virginia University. She was a member of the Hampshire County (WV) FFA Chapter. Her high school agricultural teachers were Paul Roomsburg, Bill Chainey, and Ronnie Watson.

Creative SAEs -- Professional Fitting and Showing Livestock

by Becky Ridgeway

FFA members are always looking for new Supervised Agricultural Experience Programs ideas. After coming up with several ideas, I have found one that I would have been personally interested. The SAE program that I selected will make a great entrepreneurship opportunity for a student that has experience with livestock. Many students want a way to make some money and continue to make progress on earning their State and American FFA degrees. Student with livestock experience could start their own business of professional fitting and showing livestock. Students could start out small at local and state fairs by fitting and showing livestock for people they already know. They can work their way up to fitting and showing at national shows.

A professional fitting and showing business will permit students to make money doing something they enjoy. In the beginning student will not charge fees similar to other professional fitters, but they will have an advantage. Local owners on the show circuit are often more likely to hire an FFA member because they know they are helping the student. Even though livestock shows are not held throughout the year, the student has opportunities to expand their business. Other opportunities could include production of club calves and lambs or the student could offer other services such as shearing lambs. All of the other ventures can increase the student's earning capacity.

The SAE program will allow the student to learn various business skills including record keeping. The student may even consider offering classes on how to shear, fit and show livestock. This would be an excellent way to help others succeed. The SAE would be a great way for the student to make contacts within the industry and expand their knowledge and skills. The student would be able to start out small with this SAE program but there are endless opportunities in expanding this business to fit the interest of the student.

Becky Ridgeway is a student in Agricultural and Extension Education at West Virginia University. She was a member of the Lingamore (MD) FFA Chapter. Her high school agricultural teachers were Pat Beachy and Tom Hawthorne.

Creative SAEs

by Veronica Milliken

Using plaster of paris to collect wild-life tracks, creating cemetery arraignments and selling homemade canned goods may not seem to have much in common but these activities have the potential to be supervised agricultural experience programs. A supervised agricultural experience program is a fundamental part of the agricultural education program. SAE programs allow students the opportunity to explore careers, gain experience, earn money, improve communication skills, develop management skills, and earn FFA awards and degrees. SAE programs also help students develop knowledge and skills to succeed in college or other post secondary educational opportunities.

The student's interest is one of the most important elements in selecting a supervised agricultural experience program. Encouraging exploratory SAE programs is a way for students to discover the area of agriculture in which they are most interested. Exploratory SAE programs could include collec-

tions of insects, leaves, wildlife tracks and flowers, or planning a landscape design.

A research supervised agricultural experience program may be right for curious students. Research SAE programs are a way for students to conduct experiments and analyze subjects that interested them during classroom instruction.

Placement supervised agricultural experience programs can encompass a large variety of students interests. Pet grooming at local shelters, kennel employment or rodeo event staff member could be placement SAE programs.

Entrepreneurship/ownership SAE programs can be very exciting because students sense the fact they are planning and operating an agricultural-related business. This type of SAE program includes livestock or crop production as well as selling homemade canned goods or owning an AI breeding ser-

vice. Owning a small floral business specializing in cemetery arraignments, domestic fowl production, Indian corn production and mint production are additional examples of entrepreneurship/ownership SAE programs.

Some SAE programs are more expensive to get started which might discourage some students and parents involvement in the SAE component of agricultural education. Fortunately, the National FFA Organizations provides ways for students to obtain money for starting their SAE programs. Several different SAE grants are available to FFA members. The Agri-Entrepreneurship award program is another method to obtain money for SAE programs. Utilizing the resources on the National FFA website is a great way to discover programs that are available.

Veronica Milliken is a student in Agricultural and Extension Education at West Virginia University. She was a member of the Roane County (WV) FFA Chapter. Her high school agricultural teachers were Paul Cummings, Jim Workman, and Russell Moore.

Creative SAEs -- Raising Club Calves

by Amie Crayne

The creative SAE that I have come up with is starting a small club calf operation. This can be for students with preexisting cow-calf operations or existing club calf operations looking to increase their profit. Club calves are very popular in today's cattle industry and they can be very profitable with the right cattle and knowledge. Cows and calves sold in today's market can bring tens of thousands of dollars. With the latest tech-

nology it's even easier to have top notch show cattle. With techniques such as AI and embryo transfer, your possibilities of dams and sires are endless.

This suggestion combines many of the components of a SAE including record keeping, starting a business, learning new skills, making decisions, and providing the student with an opportunity to make money. Students

with preexisting cattle operations will be able to use this SAE to make improvements, not only to the herd itself, but to the total farm operation. Most club calf operations only have a small herd, some less than 10 cows, so the student does not need to have a large number of cattle to get started. Showing your cattle is a good way to develop a good reputation and also sell the calves. I previously

(continued on page 7)

Raising Club Calves (continued)

listed three opportunities to expand the actual SAE to provide other sources of income including AI, embryo transfer, and showing, clipping and fitting cattle. These are prime opportunities to make money in the show cattle industry. With a little instruction on these techniques, the student will not only be making money, but saving money as well.

I feel this is a great SAE because the student is able to take a subject they are passionate about and use today's technology to achieve great things in life. This SAE will give them opportunities for awards and room for the SAE to grow. More importantly, this SAE gives the student an opportunity to ac-

quire many of the skills needed to be successful in one of the most important fields of agriculture.

Amie Crayne is a student in Agricultural and Extension Education at West Virginia University. She was a member of the Waynesburg (PA) FFA Chapter. Her high school agricultural teacher was Robert Born.

Why Do an SAE?

by Michelle Walls

When I first entered the agriculture education program, I was told that I would need to begin a Supervised Agricultural Experience Program. Since I lived on a farm and already raised livestock, it was easy to have an SAE. However, when my advisor gave me a record book and told me to keep it accurate and up-to-date, my SAE became more difficult.

I started to become stressed about having to complete so many pages of records. Then I realized that I wasn't the only FFA member having difficulty keeping records current. When I asked my fellow classmates why they were having trouble with their record book, it appeared that we were all having the same problem. My classmates, as well as myself, were not recording our expenses and income on a regular basis. When we found time to work on our record book, it was nearly impossible to remember all of the expenses and income for months at a time.

My FFA advisor came up with a solution to help us keep our SAE record books current. Every Tuesday morning, he would give my agriculture and natural resources class fifteen minutes of class time to work on our record books. He would have us record our information on a calendar and bring it in on Tuesdays to insert the information into our record books. By recording my expenses each week I did not forget any information and was able to keep my records current.

Some students have difficulty understanding where certain amounts should be entered into the book and were unable to figure out what each page was requesting. Most of the time, the amounts that they entered were not summed correctly and they would give up on trying to find where they made the mistake. Luckily, our advisors began to stay after school and assist students who were having trouble with their SAE record books.

They would help the FFA members complete their records and answer any questions asked in an effort to keep them accurate.

Through my SAE I learned to keep accurate records. Keeping records not only helps me to determine my profits or losses from my supervised agricultural experience, but also helps me with all of the jobs that I may encounter. Without my advisors solution to keeping my record books current, I would have given up on my SAE altogether. With his guidance and willingness to help, my supervised agricultural experience record book always remains current and up-to-date. I have received my State FFA degree and plan on completing proficiency award applications this year and apply for the American FFA Degree in the future.

Michelle Walls is a student at Jefferson High School (WV) where she is member of the FFA Chapter. Her high school agricultural teachers are Mitchell Fincham and Jeremy Greene.

Why Do an SAE?

by Brooke Shipe

What is an SAE? Many times people not involved with the FFA ask me, and sometimes, I just don't know what to say. There are so many things to include when you try to explain all aspects of an SAE. You could just say, "It's a Supervised Agricultural Experience." But really, is that all it is? Do people really know what that means? There are so many opportunities involved with an SAE. You could have an agricultural related job, work on a farm, raise animals, and many other options. It's really not what you do for your SAE that's important. What you get out of it is even better. Mr. Fincham (my Agriculture Teacher) seems to get on us everyday about our SAEs, especially about keeping our record books up-to-date. The record books are designed to keep track of all of the income, expenses, leadership experiences and other aspects of the SAE. He gives us time in class every Tuesday to work on them. He even stays after school to

give students extra help to keep them current. And yeah, sometimes it is a pain trying to keep everything organized and efficient, but after it's all said and done, there are so many rewards.

You can earn advanced degrees, proficiency awards, and many other national awards. I plan to apply for my State FFA Degree this year. You also learn organization skills, responsibility, and make many friends. You also know how much money you are making and losing. I used to complain tremendously about having to keep my records. I used to say things like, "Why can't I just keep my animals and work at my job?" and, "Does it really matter how much money I'm making or losing?" Well, I found out the answer is yes! It does matter how much money I'm making or losing. I just finished closing out my record book from last year, and I was a bit surprised. I actually made a

lot more money that I thought I had. It's not just about the money though. Yes, it is very important, but you have to have a love for what you're doing. Record keeping is a lifelong skill that is needed for any occupation.

Brooke Shipe is a student at Jefferson High School (WV) where she is member of the FFA Chapter. Her high school agricultural teachers are Mitchell Fincham and Jeremy Greene.

2006 Equine CDE

May 6, 2006

**Meredith Manor International
Equestrian Centre**

**Route 1 Box 66
Waverly, WV 26184**

www.meredithmanor.com.

Important Dates

Mar 31	State Governing Body	Cedar Lakes
April 7	Beef Expo and Grasslands CDEs (tentative)	Jackson's Mill
Apr 27	West Virginia Envirothon	Jackson's Mill
May 6	State Equine CDE	Meredith Manor Equestrian Centre
Jul 12-15	78th State FFA Convention	Cedar Lakes
Aug 13	State Dairy Cattle CDE	Jackson's Mill

Email Addresses and Phone Numbers

WVU-AGEE	Office Fax	(304) 293-3752
Dr. Stacy A. Gartin	sgartin@wvu.edu	(304) 293-4832 ext. 4480
Dr. Harry N. Boone, Jr.	hnboone@wvu.edu	(304) 293-4832 ext. 4481
Dr. Deborah A. Boone	debby.boone@mail.wvu.edu	(304) 293-4832 ext. 4482
Daniel Shockey	dan.shockey@mail.wvu.edu	(304) 293-5190
Seth Gartin	seth.gartin@mail.wvu.edu	(304) 293-4832 ext. 4477
Alice Compton	alice.compton@mail.wvu.edu	(304) 293-4832 ext. 4484
Website	http://www.caf.wvu.edu/resm/ae	
WVDE	Office Fax	(304) 558-1055
Donald L. Michael	dmichael@access.k12.wv.us	(304) 558-2347
Keith Burdette	kburdett@access.k12.wv.us	(304) 558-2347
Kelly Turley	kturley@access.k12.wv.us	(304) 558-2347
Website	http://www.wvffa.org	

Published by:

West Virginia University
Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry, and
Consumer Sciences
Division of Resource Management
Agricultural & Extension Education
Morgantown, WV 26506-6108

in cooperation with

West Virginia Department of Education
Division of Technical & Adult Education
Services

Office of Program Services
Agricultural Education
Charleston, WV 25305

and

West Virginia Association
of Agricultural Educators

Volume LVI No. 1

Non Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Morgantown, WV
Permit No. 34

Agricultural & Environmental Education
Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry, and
Consumer Sciences
P.O. Box 6108, Room 2056 Ag. Sciences Bldg.
West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV 26506-6108