



West Virginia AG ED NEWS and VIEWS

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The Perfect Omelet

by Carol Webb: 2009 Southern States Cooperative Agricultural Leadership Award Winner

How do you prefer your omelet? What do you consider a good omelet? If you're an agriculture teacher you probably don't have time....but on occasion there are those special days when you can find time to make the perfect omelet. For my family, there are three factors in their perfect omelet. One, the filling should be cheesy with grated mozzarella or cheddar for a chewy texture with a combination of meat and vegetables. Two, the eggs should be just right.... fluffy and tasty; not watery or hard nor dry and finally, the omelet has to have just the right seasoning.

Omelets are versatile because you can combine whatever filling/ingredients your family desires and season them according to your taste. If you're an omnivore, add lots of meat along with the veggies in the omelet such as sausage, ham, steak, and even chicken. If you desire a veggie omelet, chopped mushrooms, bell peppers, sliced olives, and diced onions work nicely. Another secret of making a good omelet is in the cooking of the eggs! Great omelets take time; that is, if you want the perfect omelet with soft, moist, fluffy and tasty eggs. Don't forget the seasoning....a dash of salt, fresh ground pepper or a splash of your favorite sauce. The bottom line though starts....**To make an omelet you have to be willing to break a few eggs.**

Thinking about the beginning of another school year brings optimism and excitement. Like the many dedicated agriculture teachers across this state and nation I take great passion and responsibility for the opportunity to work and be responsible for student learning. I am humbled to work beside many professionals in our profession that have accomplished so much.

However along with the positive there are many challenges we face in our agricultural education programs. There are many eggs to break. The challenges and opportunities we face trying to make the perfect Agricultural Education Program are funding, facility improvement, program assessment, student test scores and time. Some of us have different tastes, opinions, or challenges but in the end our goal is the same. We want to end up with an appealing final product, successful agricultural education students in the 21st century.

Breaking the Eggs in Ag Education

Set high standards for your classroom, SAE programs and FFA. Remember: stand up for what is right and stand by your decisions for the quality your program. As agriculture education teachers we are often faced with many difficult student based decisions. Even if this is difficult, remember we are running an agricultural education program and not a popularity contest! Although some decisions we have to make for the quality of our programs are not popular with everyone, in the long run these decisions will pay dividends for the quality of the program. Don't be a complacent one which has little control over what is happening

Be Proactive – Develop an agenda for your program. Set goals and be actively engaged. Work with others and be willing to share and collaborate with those in your department and those outside of your department. Think less about me and more about us. It's disappointing to have agriculture programs across the state where students have to pick sides because of turmoil in the agriculture department. There will always be different philosophies and some things we may never change, but let's put



the egos aside and have a unified approach in our agriculture departments for the sake of our students

Be involved with students on the elementary, middle, high school, and college levels. This includes 4-H and traditional and nontraditional FFA students. Be a player and remember the skill in the game determines the outcome. Be front and center and don't isolate yourself. Visit your newspaper office and make personal contacts to get your students and program as much positive publicity as possible

The Filling - Key Ingredients

Lobby at the local, state and national level in the interest of agriculture and agricultural education. We need to promote our product, our students, and sell the quality of our programs. Remember we are here for **all** students. Winning is wonderful for the confidence of the students and teacher and provides an awesome opportunity for students to compete further. However, due to our **competitive nature, do we often** become so overwhelmed with winning CDEs, contests and FFA officers leadership development that we miss out on visiting or spending time with our other students? Don't feel guilty about seeking funding from an out-

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Guest Editorial: Response to “Will History be Kind to You?”

by Ronald H. Hudson, Jr.

After reading your article “Will History be Kind to You?” in the March-April 2009 issue of *Ag Ed News and Views*, it made me ponder a few points. This is of no offense to the author of the article, please understand this. I think it can be difficult to know exactly what is going on at the high school level if you have been removed from it for so long. Let’s face it, when is the last time you had to do hall duty, conduct fund raisers for a graduating class so they can have prom, complete homeroom details, and (my favorite) perform duties as assigned. We, the teachers, are never correct anymore. “My child would never do that.” Times have changed and so have our schools. When was the last time you have dealt with a code red, weapons, video cameras, lawyers, and even police interviews on a Sunday morning? When have you run a meats facility, conducted greenhouse business, worked in the shop, completed community service projects, helped students with their supervised agriculture experience programs, taught seven different classes a day with one prep, waited for a bell before you could use the restroom, or changed your instructional techniques.

First point: If it won’t be put on your head stone, it’s not important. I hope my head stone says something about loving husband and father for this is what really matters. I have a job and career that puts food on the table, clothes on their backs, and a roof over their heads. I think many of us at one point or another have lost sight of the most important things in our lives. I want to be the best husband and father to my family that I can be. I often wonder if the hard work some teachers put into this job is to glorify themselves. Folks it’s time for some of us to wake up. It’s just a contest!!! I hope to God that people don’t re-

member me for how many contests in which my students place first. A contest is to evaluate the knowledge of our students not to put feathers in our caps. I first was orientated to the good old boys club 16 years ago with a single comment “He hasn’t taught long enough to have a state winner.” What an opening line to be welcomed into the teaching field. I was most excited to hear this because this was my chosen career field. This is what I have to deal with for the next 30 years. I have been fortunate to have students willing to learn and earn their way in spite of me.

Second point: What is the reason we are teaching? Why should I have to look down the road to see if my instructional techniques were adequate? Have you ever had a former student walk up to you and say “well I think you used the power point presentations a little too much and your interest approaches were just a little boring?” I never have. Let’s be serious here, at the end of your career are you really going to be remembered for how you taught students or the fact that you taught students. We have all had our good lessons and our bad ones, but doesn’t everyone. What we teach out of books is the least important thing in school. What we teach about life from our experiences is the only thing that will last.

Third point: The word **ALL**. It seems to be a catch phrase for Ag. Ed. Do all of your students pay dues? I have always had a problem of paying someone’s dues just to get a plaque. What other reason is there. I would rather have a smaller group who are active than a larger one polluted with do nothings. Do all of your students have an SAE? No. Do I push the issue? No. If they are interested do I give them every chance and opportunity?

Yes. Do all of your students..... NO they do not ALL. We live in a time of choice and preference. Are all of our students in our classes because they want to be?

No. You are always going to have a small group of gung ho students who grab the bull by the horns and run with it, a large group who is going to be there literally and a group who doesn’t want to do anything especially an SAE. Yes, our programs need to offer students every part of the Ag. Ed. experience. No, we are not miracle workers and not every child is going to be of superb values and actions when they leave us. The world is not a perfect utopian society.

Fourth point: It’s just a job. We do try to do the best we can. Things may not always seem as sunny in the trenches because we are covered up with so much other crap. It’s time we all slow down a little bit and do a personal inventory of what really matters. Let’s face it, if the students are not the reason we go to work, it’s time to find another job. I really don’t care who will look back at my career and say “He was a ...”.

Ronald Hudson earned Bachelor of Science (1993) and Master of Science(1998) degrees in agricultural education from West Virginia University. He is currently employed as an agricultural education teacher at Pendleton County High School.



The opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions and/or opinions of the Agricultural and Extension Education program, the Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Consumer Sciences, or West Virginia University.

Transitions

Individual

Charles Bennett
Danny Dewhurst
Stacey Gleason
Arlyn Haslacker
Harold “Dan” Junkins
Jenna Meeks
Ashby Ruddle
Julie Sions
Sandra Surgeon
Dana Young

Former Position

Fort Frye High School, Ohio

WVU Student
Moorefield High School

OSU Student
Mineral County Technical

WVU Student
Mineral County Technical

Current Position

Mineral County Technical
East Hardy Early/Middle School
Petersburg High School
Retired
Moorefield High school
Hannan High School

Mineral County Technical
Greenbrier West

Extension Profile: The Life of an Extension Agent

by Debbie Friend, WVU Extension Agent, Braxton County

Growing up with a father who was a WVU Extension Specialist, I learned early on what it meant to work long days, weekends and anytime the phone rings. I decided very early in my life that I wanted a career that involved working with livestock. Marrying a farmer, living on a farm and raising a family on a farm were things that I was sure would make the best life for me. I wasn't sure however, the exact route my career would take until I was in my 20's.

While working on a B.S. in Animal Science at WVU, I decided that I wanted to earn a PhD and work at a University doing research and teaching in the area of reproductive physiology. So, following graduation, I moved on to graduate school at Michigan State University. It didn't take me long to realize that I wanted a more basic, hands on career – I didn't want to spend my life in a lab with four walls. I contacted my trusted advisor, Dr. Paul Lewis at WVU. During our conversation he said, "Don't forget about Extension." Thankfully, I took his advice and that's how my 18 and ½ year WVU Extension Service career began.

I've worked in Braxton, Gilmer, Clay, and had a brief four county appointment in Braxton, Clay, Roane and Webster counties. Absolutely and without a doubt, the youth agriculture programs I've worked with have been the best part of the work in every county. It has been the best because it is what I enjoy the most and I believe it is what I do best.

When I started working in Braxton County, there were 17 feeder calves exhibited by about seven or eight youth and adults. It was a goal of the Braxton County Fair Association members to increase the number of youth that were involved in the program and to increase the number of livestock exhibited at the county fair. In 1994, we started the first 4-H/FFA Heifer Project. We recruited five kids, located five pre-vaccinated heifer calves and the kids drew for their heifer. The youth were responsible for the care of the heifers from October until the following August. They bought all the feed, built all the fence, transported their heifers when necessary, etc. Three of the project members were first-time cattle owners while two of the members lived on beef cattle farms. The members attended monthly

workshops with topics like quality assurance, nutrition, showmanship, reproduction, etc.

Our local veterinarian provided a health workshop where the members learned about vaccinations and vaccinated their own heifers. We synchronized the heifers and time-bred them. We then found a farm willing to provide a clean-up bull for the heifers. The kids exhibited and sold their heifers at the first annual 4-H/FFA Livestock Sale at the Braxton County Fair. We were also able to find a couple young 4-H'ers willing to take the market lamb project. That first sale included the five bred heifers and two pens of market lambs.

From that beginning, the livestock shows and sale at the Braxton County Fair have grown into about 100 animals exhibited by about 60 youth and adults. This year's, 16th annual sale will include market steers, market hogs, market lambs, market goats and market rabbits. We've added skillathons for each of the species and other educational programs along the way.

Skillathons are great tools because they serve as a test and a teaching tool at the same time. A recent survey of West Virginia 4-H and FFA members showed that participants agreed or strongly agreed that because of their participation in skillathon-type events they felt better about themselves because they could complete a project, they felt good about the decisions they made, and they saw themselves as a winner even if they didn't win. Respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that they were better prepared to listen carefully to what others say, to work out problems that were presented, to follow instructions, and to share their knowledge and skills with others. As one respondent said, "I love the skillathon. It doesn't require you to be anything because of your last name or how much you could spend on an animal. It is just you learning from your project and how bad you want to do good learning all the info."

Livestock judging is another great tool in a youth agriculture program that can not only teach kids about evaluating livestock, but can also increase their decision making skills, teach public speaking skills, and enhance their self-esteem. I've learned a lot



about kids over the years by coaching them. I've also learned a lot from them. Doing the kids justice by making sure they are well prepared for judging contests takes a lot of time. The Beef Expo Stockman's Contest is one at which 4-H and FFA members I've helped have done extremely well. The kids that have done really well have worked not only at the practices, but also have studied take home materials and looked up information on their own.

People have asked me how I can give so much time to those practices. Like everything else, it's where you place your priority. I've seen what livestock judging and participation in these skillathon related events can do for kids that I've worked with. Not hard research results, but those anecdotal results we hear about. The pride that I've seen on the face of someone who just heard their name read as a top finisher in a contest – no other award, just had their name read. I once received a letter from a 4-H member who had been forced to participate in livestock judging as a punishment (at the time, that wasn't very rewarding for me). The following year, she did it by choice. The following year, she was a member of the top 4-H livestock judging team in the state. Her letter said, "...before I was in livestock judging, I was just a loser. Your coaching helped me become a winner." It's easy for me to take the time to make youth livestock judging teams a priority.

We've had parents and other volunteers go beyond the call of duty – transporting animals, providing animals for judging workshops, recruiting buyers for the

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Alumni Profile: Preparing for a Career with the Farm Service Agency

by Mathew Kleski

When I graduated from West Virginia University in May of 2004, I began a career with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) working with the Ohio State Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Columbus, Ohio. Currently, I work as a Price Support Program Specialist and I also serve as the state's eGov Coordinator.

My position works primarily with programs geared to assisting producers with cash flow on the farm in both the forms of government loans and government program payments. In working in the Ohio State Office I oversee Price Support activities that are conducted by 71 county offices across Ohio. The primary focus of Price Support programs are Commodity Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs). Another major focus of loan programs that I work with is the Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) Program. This program works with producers to build on-farm storage structures for a variety of commodities. I work with all of the livestock programs for the agency. Currently the main focus of that area is the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) Program, but has included Dairy Disaster Programs and Ewe Lamb Programs as well. I also work with the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program which helps producers of agricultural commodities adjust to competition from imports by providing them technical assistance, cash payments and opportunities for job retraining.

Part of my position focuses on the eGOV initiative. I have had the opportunity to work hands-on with employees and producers as governmental programs transition to a more web-based format. I have conducted training sessions across the state to help farmers establish online accounts so that they may apply for program benefits offered by the agency as well as retrieve financial information on benefits they have received from FSA online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This opportunity has allowed me to travel the state working one-on-one with the farming community that our Agency serves. It has been a great learning experience as participants have a wide range of learning styles and level of comfort with online systems. It has been a challenge to educate on a level that all parties not only understood the system, but they felt was rewarding.

While my position may not be a traditional position for someone with a degree in Agriculture Education to pursue, I feel that my course work and education has helped me a great deal in my career. I feel that having the background of learning styles and being able to effectively reach an audience is something I use on a daily basis. Since I work in the State Office I do training of some fashion every day. Whether the training is done in the County Office, over the phone, or via various web-based training methods you must be able to effectively reach your audience and provide an end-product that is beneficial to everyone at hand.

While sometimes in class you may feel like you will never use some of the stuff you are learning, I do appreciate all the courses and programs I worked with through my Master's program. On a daily basis I work with problem solving and the strong backing in educational principles and thought processes makes that portion of my job easier. I feel that my education background has also helped me to take a more wide-open approach to various tasks. In the thesis process you are forced to look at a wide spectrum of opinions and thoughts so that you can comfortably make your own educated decisions and thoughts on the topic at hand and maintain a strong support for your decision. I feel that this backing has helped me in my position because with government programs it seems that things get into a "rut" and are done just because they have been done that way for years. The process may not be the most effective but it has become a tradition. My approach is that we don't need to fix everything if isn't broke, but there are ways that things can run more efficiently. In an economic time when funds are limited and staffing is short, this is an essential skill. However, before anything can change you must do your research to understand why things are done the way they are and build a strong case on how changes could be made according to Federal Regulations and existing program guidelines.

I have had the opportunity to serve on several national task forces to evaluate and analysis current operating systems. I feel that my educational background and ability to work with various educational levels has helped in me being selected by the National FSA Office to serve on these committees. I



have assisted with developing and testing new software and computer functions. The most recent was assisting with the national testing and piloting of GIS software in our County Offices for the Grain Bin Storage Tool. This software will allow County Offices nationwide to plot GIS points with respect to loan grain bins and ultimately bins that are part of the Farm Storage Facility Loan program as well.

At the present time I am also working on a Task Force based in Washington DC that is analyzing the current method for which Marketing Assistance Loans are made and the effectiveness of this program. The task force has been a great challenge in being able to see how the same program is not only different from county to county in Ohio, but across the 50 states and the US territories. It has also brought a greater understanding and evaluation of processes related to commodities that I do not work with on a daily basis in Ohio.

While my position is focused on Price Support and has a large component of financial factors related to it, I feel that Agricultural Education is a perfect fit. Without the backing of education I feel it would be a great challenge to find ways to effectively reach the wide array of people that I work with on a daily basis. I also feel that this background has helped me in exploring and being comfortable with looking for ways to do non-traditional education if it is the most effective for a solution. Looking back I am very fortunate for the time that I spent at WVU and feel that it has helped me to land my current position. I feel that the combina-

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The Perfect Omelet (continued)

side source. After all we are seeking it for our programs and students not ourselves. Continue to provide student centered learning and real world experiences through experiential learning and SAEs. Teach the basics very very well. Lay a solid foundation for students to continue their education or enter the agricultural industry. Integrate technology, but always remember there's more to a cow than a widget with four legs. Rubrics are popular evaluation pieces but in my opinion should not replace common sense. Continue to request professional development opportunities for agricultural education teachers from the local level up. Prepare our students to be leaders. We do a great job of building confidence and developing business and communication skills. Work with advisory committees and the agricultural industry to keep agricultural curriculums relevant and up to date. Be open to new ideas, welcome volunteers and take advice from others. Remember, though, that at the end of the day you will be held accountable for your final decisions.

The Seasoning

Don't forget the importance of promoting diversity in your class and in FFA. Beat the often stereotypic image of FFA. Promote sustainability in your agricultural curriculum. Involve your parents, communities and administration in your program. Be appreciative and thankful for what you have. Figure out how to get up each day and face the challenges and opportunities with renewed energy. Finally, remember that making an omelet is hard work and often exhausting! Try to take time for yourself and your fam-

ily. Remember the school will be there tomorrow.

The Result - The Perfect Agricultural Education Omelet - Enjoy!

Agriculture will be seen as **the** career field of choice for the best and brightest students in our schools. Students will be actively engaged in learning and agricultural education will be the example of perfect project based learning. The public will understand that agriculture is a dynamic industry in which advanced scientific knowledge is essential to undertake the multitude of careers. Science will continue to be highlighted in agriculture curriculums and the need for making scientific advancements necessary to feed our nation and world will be apparent to all students.

Families will realize the importance of agriculture and the importance of being the world's leader in food production and also know the importance of family farms in producing sustainable agricultural products. All students will have SAE's and know the importance of record keeping in their daily lives irregardless of their career choice. FFA members will remember the importance of ethics in their daily lives and SAEs. Students will develop leadership and confidence from their involvement in FFA and be competitive locally nationally and globally as future leaders for the agricultural industry.

Agriculture list serves and wikis will be used by our teachers across the state and nation to collaborate. Postsecondary institutions and the state department of education will provide relevant industry related

inservices to update and support our agriculture education professionals. Educators throughout the school, without regard to grade level or school location, will include agriculture in the classroom in all aspects of their curriculum. Post secondary and secondary teachers will work together. Agriculture will be seen as a leader in the, "Green Movement." Environmental stewardship will be further incorporated into agriculture education curricula. With agriculture education front and center funding will be available to provide students the opportunity to explore diverse career options through our programs.

Carol Webb is the 2009 winner of the Southern States Agriculture Education Leadership Award. She earned Bachelor of Science (1984) and Master of Science(1995) degrees in agricultural education from West Virginia University. Mrs. Webb has been teaching agriculture since 1984. From 1984 to 1990 Mrs. Webb taught agriculture in Virginia where she was named Virginia's Agriscience Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Webb is currently an agricultural education teacher at Mineral County Technical Center. She has received the Honorary State and American FFA degrees and was a finalist for the WV Teacher of the Year. She is a Past President of the West Virginia Agriculture Teachers Association. Mrs. Webb resides in Burlington with her husband Eddie, where they are involved in the family farm operation. Her daughter, Megan was the recipient of the West Virginia Star Agribusiness award and will receive her American FFA Degree this year.

Extension Profile: Debbie Friend (continued)

sale, buying feed for kids – I've been amazed at the generosity shown by the top notch folks with whom I've worked. Of course there have also been some challenging individuals who for some reason forgot that the most important part of the livestock project was the kid on the end of the halter. Thankfully, in the majority of cases, folks

are more interested in producing blue ribbon kids than blue ribbon animals.

The key to success for youth agriculture and other programs is quality volunteers. Folks that see the value in what they can give to the youth who are involved. Not because of what the adult can get out of it,

but for what it does for the kids. Not for the money the kids can make selling project animals, but for responsibility they learn and for the quality time it gives to parents and kids working together.

Debbie Friend is employed as a WVU Extension Agent in Braxton County.

Alumni Profile: Matt Kleski (continued)

tion of education, thesis, and the Research Assistant role that I worked in with WVU Extension Risk Management have all been factors in getting me to the place that I am today. I feel very blessed to have come across Dr. Harry Boone, Dr. Debby Boone and Dr. Stacy Gartin who led me down an educational path that truly has paid off. All

the hard work that was put into the classes and thesis process was well worth it. I also feel that the hands-on opportunity I was given in my Graduate program working with Tom McConnell, in WVU Extension, Risk Management was priceless. This gave me a real-world component to my education as well as helped me see where I wanted to go

in a career field. My time spent at WVU gave me a strong backing both experience-wise and educational-wise to become an effective leader and educator in the agriculture industry.

Matt Kleski earned a Master of Science (2004) degree in agricultural education from West Virginia University.

Research in Action: State Supervisors Roles in Agricultural Education Curriculum

by Ridgeway, B., & Boone, D. A.

Throughout history, agricultural education has played an important role in the educational system. Agriculture has played the role of determining when schools would be opened and closed during planting and harvesting seasons. Even though school systems don't close during harvest season anymore, students today have the opportunity to learn more about how agricultural has diversified over the years. Students have the opportunity to learn about all areas of agriculture including animal and plant sciences, greenhouse and nursery, forestry, mechanics and much more. With students using the same criteria and requirements to compete for national awards, have they been afforded the same curriculum? The question arises, what are agricultural students learning across the United States? Are all students being taught the same subject matter?

The purpose of this study was to determine what differences exist among state agricultural education programs in the United States, including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. How do agricultural education program laboratories/facilities differ across the country and in what ways? The target population was the head state agricultural education leaders employed during the spring of 2009. A census was conducted of all head state agricultural education leaders including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands employed during the spring of 2009. The data were collected using descriptive research methods. The researchers designed an instrument to meet the objectives of the study. Dillman's Total Design method principles were utilized to maximize the response rate.

Population

The accessible population for the study included 52 individuals who were the lead state supervisors in the spring of 2009 including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Of the 52 mailed surveys 36 (69%) were returned.

Data were collected regarding gender, age, agriculture teaching experience, and states supervisor experience including lead state supervisor. There were 31 (86.1%) respondents who were male and five (13.9%) respondents indicated they were female.

Two (5.6%) respondents were between the ages of 20-30 years of age. The number of individuals in the 31-40 years of age category totaled seven (19.4%). Six respondents (16.7%) were 41-50 years of age and 13 (36.1%) respondents were between the ages of 51-60 years of age. Eight (22.2%) respondents indicated they were in the 61-70 years of age.

Thirty-three respondents (91.7%) indicated they had been an agriculture teacher. One (2.8%) individual had been an agriculture teacher for less than one year. Four (11.1%) respondents had 1 - 5 years teaching experience and 10 (27.8%) respondents had 6 - 10 years of teaching experience. Respondents with 11 - 15 years teaching experience included eight (22.2%) respondents and the number in the 16 - 20 years teaching experience was two (5.6%) respondents. Two (5.6%) respondents reported 21 - 25 years teaching experience and six (16.7%) respondents indicated 26 plus years of teaching experience.

Four (11.1%) respondents had less than one year experience and 12 (33.3%) respondents had between 1-5 years experience as state supervisor. The number of individuals with 6-10 years experience as state supervisor was seven (19.4%). Five (13.9%) respondents had 11-15 years experience as state supervisor and one (2.8%) respondents had 16 - 20 years experience as state supervisor. Two (5.6%) respondents had 16-20 years experience as state supervisor and five (13.9%) respondents had 26 plus years of experience as a state supervisor.

A majority of state supervisors who responded to the survey communicated career development event information to the agriculture teachers along with assuming responsibility for coordinating the CDE schedule. A majority of lead state supervisors include teachers' opinions in making changes to career development events as well as when making changes to the agriculture education curriculum. A majority of the respondents make at least one visit to first year teachers.

A majority of state supervisors have a direct role in communicating and coordinating career development event information. In a majority of the respondent states, the

executive secretary had primary responsibility for communicating and coordinating the CDE events. Other individuals involved in coordinating career developments events included state supervisors with FFA responsibilities, university faculty and Extension service personnel.

The majority of state supervisors indicated that the executive secretary is responsible for working with the state FFA officer team. The second person most likely to work with the state FFA officer team is the lead state supervisor followed closely by the state supervisor with FFA responsibilities and university faculty.

State wide teacher's conferences were the most often used venue to include teacher's opinions on changes to high school agriculture curriculum. Other means of receiving teachers' input on changes to the curriculum included regional teachers meetings, surveys, use of email and state agricultural teacher's organization. Two respondents indicate there is no formal involvement of agricultural teachers in making changes to the agriculture education curriculum.

Respondents were asked to indicate their top five choices of communicating with teachers. The most popular means of communication by state supervisors was email. List serve (group email) was the second most frequently used method of communication followed by telephone calls and websites and by teachers' conferences.

Stand Alone Courses Offered

State supervisors were asked to identify the types of stand alone courses taught in their states. Of the 11 (36%) states who reported data for stand alone programs averages were compiled, along with total number of stand alone programs found throughout the responding states. All percentages and totals were based on the total number of high schools and technical school in the state. One state taught renewable energy as a stand alone course with 100% (min = 100, max = 100) of the programs in the state offering this stand alone program.

Eleven states reported agriculture and natural resources as a stand alone class with an average of 47.94% (min = 2.17, max = 100,

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Research in Action: State Supervisors Roles (continued)

SD = 42.58) of the programs offering the course. The average number of stand alone agriculture and natural resources programs in the 11 states reporting was 94.17 (SD = 116.09). Twelve states reporting an average of 44.64% of their programs offer agricultural mechanics as a stand alone program (min = 2.17, max = 100, SD = 39.19). The average number of stand alone agricultural mechanics programs per state was 60.69 (SD = 86.33) in the 12 reporting states.

Horticulture was reported as a stand alone program in 10 states with an average of 31.05% (min = 5.63, max = 58.70, SD = 17.73) of the programs offering this course. The average number of stand alone horticulture programs per state was 43.09 (SD = 38.00) for the 11 states reporting information. Five states reported an average of 26.57% of their programs offer aquaculture (min = .33, max = 100, SD = 41.99). As a stand alone course the average number of stand alone aquaculture programs per state was 9.60 (SD = 8.08) in the five states reporting information. Plant science was reported as a stand alone program in six states with an average of 25.16% (min = .84, max = 100, SD = 37.63) offering the course. The average number of stand alone plant science programs per state was 16.17 (SD = 16.92) for the five states reporting information.

Course Content Incorporated into Programs

Respondents were asked to identify the total number of subject matter courses taught within their states. The percentages and total number of incorporated programs was calculated from the number of high school and technical school programs reported. The total numbers of incorporated programs were calculated to give a percentage of programs in the 36 states that reported numbers. Eleven states reported an average of 83.18% of their programs included soil sciences into existing courses (min = 31.25, max = 100.00, SD = 24.04). The average number of programs which offered soil science incorporated into existing courses

was 131 programs (SD = 99.80) per state for the 11 states reporting. Plant science was incorporated into existing courses on an average of 80.85% (min = 31.25, max = 100, SD = 24.59) of the programs in 12 states. Twelve states offer plant science with an average of 117.25 (SD = 102.22) programs per state which were incorporating plant science into existing courses.

Twelve states reported an average of 79.38% of their programs offer agribusiness management by incorporating into existing programs (min = 8.79, max = 100, SD = 29.40). The average number of programs where agribusiness management was incorporated into existing courses was 114.25 (SD = 105.56) programs per state with 12 states reporting. Anatomy and physiology was reported by nine states with an average of 78.08% (min = 14.49, max = 100, SD = 34.62) of the programs incorporating anatomy and physiology into existing courses. The average number of programs per state where anatomy and physiology is incorporated into existing courses was 112.78 (SD = 105.84) programs with nine states reporting. Environmental sciences was incorporated into existing programs in an average of 72.66% (min = 2.20, max = 100, SD = 39.50) of the programs in 11 states. Ten states incorporated horticulture into existing programs in an average of 72.16% (min = 25, max = 100, SD = 28.93) of the programs. The number of programs incorporating horticulture into existing courses was on average 98.40 (SD = 100.90) programs per state with ten states reporting.

High School Program Facilities

State supervisors were asked to identify the number and types of facilities which could be found in their respective state's high school programs. Ten states reported an average of 74.80 (min = 1, max = 317, SD = 113.14) agricultural business labs per state. Agricultural mechanics labs were reported by 22 states with an average of 87.68 labs (min = 1, max = 317, SD = 87.99) per state. Animal science labs were reported by 16 states with an average of 31.38 (min = 2, max

= 120, SD = 30.21) labs per state. Sixteen states reported aquaculture labs with tanks with an average of 26.69 labs (min = 4, max = 111, SD = 30.76) per state and eight states reported aquaponics labs on an average of 6.38 (min = 2, max = 15, SD = 4.72) per state. Biotechnology labs were reported by 11 states with an average of 3.55 (min = 1, max = 10, SD = 2.46) labs per state.

Technical School Facilities

State supervisors were asked to identify the number and types of facilities which could be found in their respective state's technical school programs. Agribusiness labs were reported by two states on an average of two (min = 1, max = 3, SD = 1.41) labs per state and seven states reported agricultural mechanics labs with an average of five (min = 1, max = 8, SD = 2.71) labs per state. Animal science labs were reported by two states with an average of 3.50 (min = 3, max = 4, SD = .71) labs per state. Aquaculture labs with tanks were reported by five states with an average of three (min = 1, max = 5, SD = 1.87) labs per state and aquaponics labs were reported by three states with an average of 1.67 (min = 1, max = 2, SD = .58) labs per state. Two states indicated their states had biotechnology labs with an average of one (min = 1, max = 1) lab per state.

Data were collected from the National FFA website for all fifty states, including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, on the number of American degrees awarded in 2008. When compared to national membership data less than one percent of the total membership received the American degree. Data for state degrees were determined from survey respondents. It was found that some state did not award any state degrees in 2008, while a majority of the states awarded the state degrees to an average of three percent of their membership.

Becky Ridgeway earned Bachelor (2007) and Master of Science (2009) degrees in agricultural education from West Virginia University. Dr. Deborah Boone was Becky 's graduate advisor. The complete thesis can be accessed at <http://wvusolar.wvu.edu:8881>.

Personals

Mary V. Cain, 90, of South Charleston, died October 28, 2008, at Braley Care Home, St. Albans. She is survived by her husband of 62 years, Guy E. Cain. Mr. Cain was a supervisor of vocational agriculture from 1947 to 1977 including four years as State Supervisor (1973-1977).

Lowell N. Cook, 85, of Point Pleasant, died Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2009 at Cornerstone Hospital in Huntington. He was a retired educator and administrator with more than 40 years of service, having been employed in Mason, Clay, Jackson and Wirt counties.

Important Dates

Sep 5	WVU vs Liberty (football)	Morgantown
Sep 12	WVU vs East Carolina (football)	Morgantown
Sep 16-20	State 4-H and FFA Livestock Roundup	Jackson's Mill
Sep 22-24	Career Development Events	Morgantown
Oct 1	WVU vs Colorado (football)	Morgantown
Oct 17	WVU vs Marshall (football)	Morgantown
Oct 21-24	National FFA Convention	Indianapolis, IN
Oct 24	WVU vs Connecticut (football)	Morgantown
Nov 7	WVU vs Louisville (football)	Morgantown
Nov 27	WVU vs Pittsburgh (football)	Morgantown

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