



West Virginia AGED NEWS and VIEWS

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Are We Agricultural Science or Career and Technical Teachers? by Jason E. Hughes

As we embark on new life journeys, I believe we benefit from the experiences and lessons learned in the past. When I accepted the position of Coordinator of Agriculture, Science and Natural Resources with the West Virginia Department of Education, I began a new life journey. Fourteen years in the classroom taught me many valuable lessons about teaching and agricultural education, but the year I spent away from agricultural education, opened my eyes the most. Before taking on this new role, I served as the Coordinator of Career and Technical Education in Institutional Education Programs. I was the "vocational" director for education programs in juvenile and adult prisons and DHHR facilities. My philosophy of agriculture education was adjusted while in this position.

In fifteen institutional facilities, there was and is only one agriculture education program. Why? Jobs! It is critical that incarcerated juveniles and adults are prepared for the workforce. Having a job and being able to earn a living keeps many from recommitting crimes. Courses in agricultural education just do not equate into many job opportunities for individuals leaving prison. Obviously, with my past experience and interest, I wanted to find a way to increase the number of agriculture education programs in institutional settings. I had to evaluate those decisions as a career and technical director, not an agricultural education teacher. I had to ask some of the same questions career and technical directors have to ask in each county. I often wondered what county career and technical di-

rectors were finding as they evaluated public school agricultural education programs.

Let's pretend, for a moment, that I am the career and technical director in your county. Today, I plan to evaluate the quality of your program. Let's also pretend that I have no prior knowledge of agricultural education. I will be referring to Section J of the Career and Technical Education Handbook entitled *Evaluating and Improving Career and Technical Education Program Offerings*. The evaluation contains eight critical areas that should be considered when evaluating the effectiveness of career and technical education program offerings in a county. I will focus on only five questions in the area of program improvement. As you read the following questions, please realize that many career and technical directors are using this information to determine whether to add or close concentrations.

- 1. Which current concentrations are aligned with local, then state, then national job markets? Which are not?**
- 2. Which concentrations provide students with industry recognized credentials?**
- 3. Which concentrations are articulated with a Community and Technical College or earn EDGE credit?**
- 4. What is the placement rate? (90% Positive Placement and 60% jobs in field or continued education in field)**
- 5. Is there an active Advisory Committee for each area of concentration?**

These questions and a concern about the answers to these questions have brought about the ideas and goals I bring



Jason Hughes was recently hired as Coordinator for Agriculture, Science and Natural Resources in the West Virginia Department of Education. Jason earned B.S (1992) and M.S. (2001) degrees in Agricultural Education from West Virginia University.

to my position as Coordinator of Agriculture, Science and Natural Resources. Agricultural Education has had a role in shaping me to be the person I am today. I am proud of our traditions, but I want to be sure future generations have the same opportunities afforded to me. For this to happen, we must be able to adapt to changes in our world. We must always be looking for ways to strengthen and improve agricultural education at the local, state and national levels. As agricultural educators, we are evaluated on our effectiveness as career and technical teachers, not as science teachers. My philosophy on the importance of teaching agriculture in a scientific manner has not changed; we just cannot forget the fact that

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Are We Agricultural Science or Career and Technical Teachers? (Continued)

we are career and technical educators preparing students for careers in the agriculture industry.

Job Market

According to the US Department of Labor, increased productivity and farm consolidations are expected to result in a decline of 155,000 farmers and ranchers over the 2004-14 period. The occupations, related to agriculture, projected to grow the fastest in the same time period are in the areas of management, business, sales, and scientific research. Are your current concentrations aligned with the local, state and national job markets? If they are, you will always have a good answer for that bold and brave student in your class who asks, "Why are we learning about this?"

Industry Recognized Credentials

There are just not that many industry certifications in agriculture education. I would like to see us develop some state-wide credentials and certifications for our concentrations. I believe we should work with industry and develop certifications in agriculture mechanics, horticulture, forestry, agribusiness, and vet science. I am especially interested in seeing us create a lab technician certification in the areas of environmental systems and biotechnology.

Articulated Credit

Articulated college credit is great for our students and brings increased credibility to our programs. I would like to see us work more closely with the Community and Technical College System in developing more opportunities for articulated and EDGE credit for agriculture students. Many of the same areas I mentioned under industry recognized credentials could be developed into a program at community and technical colleges across West Virginia.

Job/Continued Education Placement

Are sixty percent of your students, in each concentration you offer, finding a job or continuing their education in-field? This is a federal Perkins Act standard. If you have a concentration consistently not meeting this standard, you might want to evaluate the job market and the need for that concentration, before someone else does. I feel that if we can offer more industry recognized credentials and develop more programs at the community and technical college level, we will see our in-field placement rates increase.

Advisory Committees

The Perkins Act specifies that parents, students, academic and career and technical education teachers, faculty, administra-

tors, career guidance and academic counselors, representatives of tech prep consortia, representatives of business and industry, labor organizations, and other interested individuals are involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of career and technical education programs. The primary purpose of a program area advisory council is to advise on curriculum content, training techniques, equipment needs and personnel needs of a particular occupational program. I strongly feel that every agriculture education program needs an advisory committee. I would like to see a state-wide advisory committee for agriculture formed so that a discussion about industry recognized credentials could begin.

Some Random FFA Dreams

- Increased WV FFA membership
- An FFA/Agriculture Education museum at Cedar Lakes
- An enhanced and interactive WV FFA webpage for students, teachers and stakeholders
- Leadership seminars for state and chapter officers offered on-line

The goals, ideas and dreams shared with you come from a desire to make a difference. I look forward to working with each of you and welcome any ideas or suggestions. If I can be of any service to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

WVAAE and NAAE Region VI's Turn the Key Award Winner



Shannon Boswell was named the WVVAE Turn the Key Award winner for 2007. Shannon is the agricultural education teacher at Doddridge County School. Ms. Boswell was also named as one of the NAAE Region VI winners in the Turn the Key Award Program.

Agricultural education is continually faced with a shortage of qualified teachers. Unless those who have been trained enter and remain in the profession for a period of several years, the shortage of qualified teachers will prevail. The NAAE "Teachers Turn the Key" scholarship program was designed as a means of encouraging young teachers to remain in the profession and to encourage and recognize participation in professional activities. NAAE members who are currently in their second, third, or fourth year of teaching are eligible to apply for this award. Applicants must be a member of NAAE during the year of application (2006-2007) and be a member of NAAE at the time of the convention at which they receive the scholarship (2007-2008). Applicants must not have attended the NAAE convention previously.

WVAE and NAAE Region VI's Outstanding Middle/Secondary School Ag Ed Program



Preston County High School was named the WVVAE Outstanding Middle/Secondary School Ag Ed Program for 2007. The 2006-2007 agricultural education teachers included Jeff Carpenter, Laah Wolford, and Ron Wilson.

Preston County High School was also named the NAAE Region VI winner of the Outstanding Middle/Secondary School Ag Ed Program. Region VI is composed of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Photo (l to r): Jeff Carpenter, Russell Dotson (Ag Ed Teacher Cameron High School), Laah Wolford, and Ron Wilson

WVAE Outstanding Teacher Winners



WVVAE 2007 Outstanding Ag Ed Teacher
Virgil Wilkins, Hundred High School

Virgil Wilkins was named the WVVAE Outstanding Ag Ed Teacher for 2007. The Outstanding Ag Ed Teacher award program recognizes NAAE members who are at the pinnacle of their profession – those who are conducting the highest quality agricultural education programs. Mr. Wilkins, the agricultural education teacher at Hundred High School, is highly regarded for his contributions to the profession.

Jeremy Greene was named the WVVAE Outstanding Young Member Award winner for 2007. The Outstanding Young member Award encourages young teachers to remain in the profession and to encourage and recognize participation in professional activities. Jeremy an agricultural education teacher at Jefferson County School, is well established in a promising career in agricultural education. He is currently serving as president of the West Virginia Association of Agricultural Educators.

Both awards use the following criteria to select their winners. Each candidate is asked to provide a brief description of their agricultural education program and the community in which the program exists. Candidates provide a statement of their personal teaching philosophy.

The applicants include examples of their effective classroom and laboratory instruction including curricula they have developed. Candidates also include examples of their accomplishments in getting students involved in work-based learning such as supervised agricultural experience programs, cooperative education and internships.

Students' participation and successes in student organization activities, including FFA, PAS, and NYFEA are a part of the judging criteria. Examples of relationships with partners such as volunteers, school and community leaders, industry leaders and others who have the capacity to support the agricultural education program are also included.

The candidates are asked to provide examples of how they market (or promote) their local program with groups such as prospective students, parents, school administrators, and community leaders. Professional growth is also evaluated. Examples are requested on how the candidates stay professionally prepared and up-to-date in teaching techniques and technical content including information regarding their participation in professional organizations such as NAAE.

Candidates are also requested to provide three letters of reference. The sources of the letters are: one letter from an administrator; one letter from an agricultural educator; and one letter from a member of the community.



WVVAE 2007 Outstanding Young Member
Jeremy Greene, Jefferson County School.

2007 West Virginia Career Development Events



Sweepstakes Winner -- Clay County HS

Ravenswood High School

Alexa Corcovilos
Staci Burdette
Lakyn Hughes
Jonathan Fletcher

Dairy Cattle -- Ravenswood HS



Agribusiness Management -- Wirt County HS



Dairy Products -- Tyler Consolidated HS



Agricultural Mechanics -- Mineral Tech Ctr.



Entomology -- Marion County Tech Ctr.



Agronomy -- Roane County HS



Equine -- Mineral County Tech Ctr.

Career Development Events



Floriculture -- Clay County HS



Nursery Landscape -- Hampshire HS



Forestry -- Tyler Consolidated HS



Plant Pathology -- Clay County HS



Livestock -- Ripley HS

St. Marys High School

Wade Poling
Alex Mossor
Jason Hartley
Brandon Cunningham

Poultry -- St. Marys HS



Meats -- Clay County HS

Ravenswood High School

Luke Mahan
Ben Francis
Tiffany Harvey
Christie Meeks

7th & 8th Grade Agriscience-- Ravenswood

Research in Action: Perceptions of Calf Pool Participants toward West Virginia Calf Pool Organizations

by Stemple, C. M., & Gartin, S. A.

Over 250 farmers participate in West Virginia calf pools. In order to get more West Virginia farmers involved in the cooperative style of marketing, promoters must clearly convey the benefits and sacrifices of participation in the West Virginia calf pool program. However, no study has been conducted to examine the satisfaction of the farmers or their thoughts for the improvement of the program. The purpose of the study was to determine the perceptions of calf pool participants toward the West Virginia calf pool organization. Information obtained from this study will be used to document calf pool participants' perceptions toward the organization.

A descriptive research design was chosen for the study. The target population was limited to participants of the calf pools in West Virginia. The list of participating farmers was obtained from the calf pool organization through West Virginia University. The names on the list were matched with the list of Beef Quality Assurance participants since to participate in the calf pool you must be BQA certified, to form a list of addresses. A total of 258 farmers were included in the accessible population. The instrument used for this study was a three-part mail questionnaire. Part I consisted of questions to gain insight to the production level and past marketing experiences of the farmer. Part II consisted of twelve Likert scaled attitudinal items relating to the calf pool organization in West Virginia. Part III of the instrument requested demographic information about the population.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Of the respondents, 154 (89%) were male and eight (4.6%) were female. Eleven respondents (6.4%) did not report gender. One (0.6%) respondent was between 21 and 30 years of age. Thirteen (7.5%) respondents stated that they were in the 31-40 years category. Thirty-seven (21.4%) producers marked the 41-50 years of age category. The 51-60 years of age category included 57 (32.9%) individuals. Thirty-seven (21.4%) individuals were between 61-70 years old and 17 (9.8%) were over the age of 71. Of the 173 respondents, 78 (48.1%) reported

that their role in the operation was full-time farmer, and had no other job outside the farm. Eighty-four (51.9%) reported that they were part-time farmers. When asked if they utilized outside labor, 59 (36.9%) replied that they did and 101 (63.1%) answered that they did not use outside labor.

Attitudes of Respondents toward Calf Pool Organization

Greater than ninety percent of participants expressed some level of agreement with the following statements: I have incurred additional costs as a result of participating in the calf pool, participation in the calf pool encouraged me to be a better manager, I receive above-market prices by participating in the calf pool, I will continue to participate in the calf pool, and I have become a better manager of my operation because of the calf pool. More than eighty percent agreed with the following statements: I am satisfied with the operation of my calf pool, as a result of the calf pool, I keep better records (birthdates, injections, etc.), and the benefits of participating in the calf pool are worth the expense, I implemented a recordkeeping system to track animals to include in the calf pool, As a result of the calf pool I have changed my feeding rations to increase growth of my animals, As a result of the calf pool, I observe my animals more closely for disease problems. More than sixty percent of participants agreed with the following statement: as a result of the calf pool I spend more time with my animals in calving season.

Calf Pool Participation

More than three-fourths of the respondents had participated in a calf pool in 2005 or 2006. Of those who did not, three-fourths had participated prior to 2005. More than half of participants reported that they plan to increase the number of calves they contribute to the calf pool in the next five years. Steers born on the farm in 2005 ranged from zero to 160 with a mean of 28.03 ($SD=27.83$). In 2006 steers born on the farm ranged from zero to 160, with a mean of 27.93 ($SD=28.72$). In 2005, participants reported purchasing between zero and 128 steers for resale through the calf pool with a mean of 1.77 ($SD=12.44$). Steers bought in 2006 for resale

through the calf pool ranged from zero to 128 with an average of 1.66 ($SD=12.46$)

Heifers born on the farm in 2005 ranged from zero to 150 with a mean of 25.94 ($SD=26.44$). Heifers born on the farm in 2006 ranged from zero to 172 with a mean of 27.19 ($SD=28.78$). Heifers purchased in 2005 for resale through the calf pool ranged from zero to 88 with a mean of 1.79 ($SD=9.71$) and heifers purchased in 2006 for resale through the calf pool ranged from zero to 53 with a mean of 1.01 ($SD=6.28$).

Eighty-one (54.7%) responded that they plan to increase the number of calves and 67 (45.3%) responded that they do not plan to increase the number of calves within the next five years.

When asked about their marketing methods before the producer joined the calf pool, greater than three-fourths "sold to stockyards." Greater than one-fifth marked each: "sold to broker," and "sold freezer beef."

Advantages and Disadvantages of Calf Pools

The top three major advantages to participating in a calf pool included: price (better price per pound), convenience (load all out in one day, shorter lines), and management (encouraged better recordkeeping). Comments on the advantages of calf pools included, "by selling calves in truckloads we increase the possibility of receiving an above-market price," "I have better management of all aspects of my farm," "selling all calves at once," "eliminates waiting in long lines," "we purchase products together for better deals," "improved genetics and overall healthier herds," and "get helpful knowledgeable assistance and feel less alone when it comes to marketing."

The top three major disadvantages to participating in a calf pool were: time/convenience (extra work to precondition), conformity within the group (too many rules), and costs (expensive to feed and vaccinate). The top three recommendations for improving the calf pool were directly related to: quality/organization (more meetings to make decisions), increasing flexibility (more freedom to manage), and education (programs

(Continued on next page)

Research in Action: Perceptions of Calf Pool Participants (Continued)

to enhance learning). Comments on the advantages of calf pools included, “too much time involved for the small premium over stockyard prices,” “not having all the freedoms of being on your own,” “buyers are still not willing to pay the premium price for preconditioned calves,” and “not all pastures have good working facilities”

Improvement of Calf Pools

Participants were asked, “Calf pools could be improved by:” Two hundred thirty-eight replies were analyzed and 50 responses (21%) were items directly related to “quality/organization” or more specifically, “continue to use performance-tested genetics” and “cooperation with each other.” Forty-two respondents (17.6%) thought the calf pool could be improved by “education” as one farmer stated, “we need to increase educational opportunities during our meetings.” Forty-two producers (17.6%) reported “flexibility” as the main improvement that could be made, especially, “being sure our vaccines are research-

based” and “being more flexible with color/breed.” Twenty-five (10.5%) respondents cited “fellowship/communication” as an improvement, citing “better communication in pools statewide would make a difference.” Twenty-four individuals (10%) wanted “stricter rules,” such as “upgrade all pools to the Gold standard” and “all pools should agree on a turn-out date for bulls.” Seventeen statements (7.1%) would like to see “more producers.” Sixteen (6.7%) thought the improvement could be made with “price,” by “creating a definite higher market price,” and 15 (6.3%) believe that “more advertising” is the key to improving calf pools.

Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Greater than 90% of respondents reported that they plan to continue participation in the calf pool.

2. An overwhelming majority of respondents were male.
3. An overwhelming majority of respondents were over the age of fifty.
4. Greater than half of participants plan to increase the number of calves they market through a pool within the next five years.
5. Greater than 90% of participants felt that calf pools induced higher prices.
6. The average producer has increased the number of animals he markets through the calf pool. Our data shows that in the first year of participation, the average producer marketed 28 animals, while 2006 data shows that the average producer marketed 38 animals through the pool.

Carrie Stemple earned a Master of Science (2007) degree in agricultural education from West Virginia University. Dr. Stacy Gartin was Carrie's graduate advisor. The complete thesis can be accessed at <https://eidr.wvu.edu/etd/documentdata.eTD?documentid=5128>.

Editorial: A Real Winner in the 2007 WV Career Development Events

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

Teenagers are often criticized for their style of dress, the way they wear their hair, their boisterous self-centered demeanors, and win at any cost attitudes. While this may be true for some individuals, I feel that this stereotype is unfair to the majority of the teenage population. Having two teenagers in my home and having met many of their friends, I honestly believe that there is tremendous potential in today's youth.

On September 21st I met Melissa Cole, a FFA member from the Gilmer County FFA Chapter, and experienced first hand what is good about today's teenagers. Before I tell Melissa's story, please allow me to give you the background leading up to this encounter.

In September West Virginia University hosts fourteen Career Development Events for the West Virginia FFA. Nearly one thousand FFA members “invade” the Morgantown campus to participate in these events. This event brings more high school students to the WVU campus at one time than any other event. I serve as the official

scorer for all of the events. I collect the Scantron forms, use the official scoring program to analyze the data, prepare the list of winners to be announced at the awards ceremony, create a PowerPoint presentation to aid the awards presenters, and prepare the official results publication. This all happens in a matter of hours with few hours of sleep. It is always my goal to perform all of these tasks in an error free manner. With the sheer volume of work and tremendous time pressures, mistakes can (and do) occur.

This year one of those mistakes occurred. I will not go into the details but the mistake centered on “cutting and pasting” in tables. The official results were correct, however, when I cut and pasted information for the presentation scripts, I made a mistake. Melissa should have been announced as a 10th place individual in the entomology contest. Instead she was announced as the first place winner in the contest and was presented with the gold medal.

Melissa could have walked away from the event with a gold medal. She was offi-

cially announced as the first place winner. Melissa, however, represents the best of today's youth. When she realized that she did not win the award she corrected the situation. After the awards ceremony she found me in the crowd of over 1200 individuals and handed the award back to me. Her comment was, “I don't think this award belongs to me.” After reviewing the results, I found my mistake. She was correct. Another student had earned the first place medal.

Melissa went home to Gilmer County without a medal on September 21st in the entomology contest, however, she returned home a winner. She went home a winner because she acted in a manner that is typically not seen, especially in teenagers. Melissa, you were a bright spot in the 2007 Career Development Events. Thank you for acting in a mature responsible manner.

The opinions expressed are those of the editor 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.

Important Dates

Nov 5	WVAAE Program and Policy Meeting	Morgantown
Nov 6	Beginning Teachers Conference	Morgantown
Nov 8	WVU Football: Louisville	Morgantown

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