

West Virginia AGED NEWS and VIEWS

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

Closing Remarks and Words of Wisdom to West Virginia's Agricultural Teachers

Mr. William West

I've been at this business of teaching agriculture for a few years and want to give some advice to younger teachers.

One of the best bits of wisdom an agriculture teacher gave me was "get your masters degree as soon as possible. There are two reasons (1) it increases your salary as a teacher for many years and (2) you get your permanent teaching certificate. This has put many dollars in my pocket over the years.

The second bit of wisdom is join your professional organization. You will not always agree on the direction or activities of the group, so get involved and set the direction and create the activities desired.

During my teaching career not many individuals talked about the struggle we all go through as teachers. It's OK to have these struggles. The struggle or decision arrives in stages. At 3-5 years of teaching we must decide if we are going to teach in that program, move to another, or even get out of teaching and move into another agricultural profession.

The decision comes up again in our teaching career at about 10-12 years. This time it's the struggle to stay in teaching, go to another profession, or even into administration. This same decision comes up again around 20 years of teaching. It's OK to have this struggle and again a decision has to be made.

As agricultural teachers we always want to remember our program should be built around solid teaching and good supervised agricultural experience programs. We must supervise these experience programs. Our

program will always be viable if this occurs. We never want to build a program around contest winnings and participation.

Concern: As agricultural teachers we are in a position to protect our heritage. Our heritage as mountaineers is to always have the opening day of deer season off with no school. This is a heritage event in West Virginia. Some outsiders from New York and California will always see this activity as senseless and unproductive in the education arena. We must hang onto the tradition which is our heritage. Other states have similar heritage and they protect their traditions.

Concern: Every contest in the FFA has a written test. Some students find this a large obstacle to overcome. We must remember some students have difficulties with written tests. In my teaching career we have never eliminated a contest, however, we keep adding: Beef Expo, Envirothon, Sophomore Creed, Agriscience program, Computers in Ag., and the list goes on

Concern: The state testing program for agriculture. We may teach and test, for example, a student's ability to fish. We teach about different fish, lures, lines, reels, baits, etc. We test on these things; however, we do not test their ability to actually fish and without this skill how can they feed the world. We **must** teach students **how to do**, not about something.

Concern: I hope we never forget the bottom line. What did you teach today: beef cattle, vegetable production? No, you taught students! I like to think I taught ag-

riculture but I actually taught students how to live a full and happy productive life.

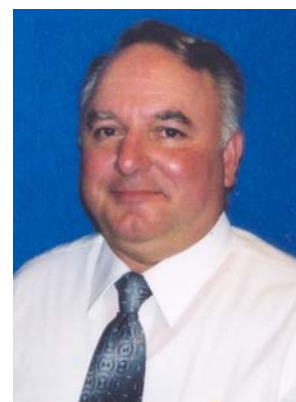
In closing if I should ever run for political office I will not forget "from whence I came." The general public will never understand all the pressure, stress, emotional drain, etc., that a teacher goes through each day of our profession.

I have had a great time teaching and enjoyed almost everyday. I tried to have fun everyday with students, teachers, friends, farmers, etc. and looked forward to fun and tricks of the next day. If I can be of any help to anyone please feel free to call.

Yours Retired,

William West
Agricultural Science Teacher Ripley High School

(William West's teaching career including Valley High School (Wetzel County) and Ripley High School (Jackson County). Between the two assignments, he served as Coordinator of Agricultural Education for the WV Dept. of Education and WV State FFA Executive Secretary. He has been a major force in the success of the WV FFA Foundation and continues to serve as its Chairman.)



Editorial: A New Beginning

by Harry N. Boone, Jr.

The high school teachers in the audience are starting a new school year. As you do, stop, answer the following questions, and reflect on how you can better serve your students.

- Does your program include all elements of the total agricultural education program (instruction, leadership, and supervised experience)?
- Do you include activities for all learner types (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) in your day-to-day instruction?
- Does each lesson begin with an interest approach to motivate students to learn the information you will present?

- Do you change instruction methods/activities every 20-30 minutes to recapture and/or maintain students' attention?
- Will all of your students have a challenging supervised experience program in 2004-2005?
- Will all of your students join the FFA in 2004-2005?
- Do you have an up-to-date course of instruction based on the needs of the local community?
- Do you have an active advisory committee?

If you answered each question with a "yes," congratulations! If you could not

answer each question with a "yes," you have some room for improvement. Quality programs, including quality teaching, are the key to continued success of high school agricultural education programs. In this issue, several of your peers have offered advice that may help you improve your teaching and your program.

I hope that you can identify at least one piece of information in this issue that will help you improve your program.

Good luck and have a great year.

A Few Good Students

by Harry N. Boone, Jr.

A few coincidences have come together this summer to make agricultural education graduates looking for employment as teachers, a scarce commodity in West Virginia. Although the overall enrollment in Agricultural and Environmental Education at West Virginia (n =76) has increased, the number of graduates who completed teaching certification credentials was down in 2003-2004. In fact, only four students completed student teaching last year. Secondly, a number of experienced teachers elected to retire in 2004. Third, a large number of experienced teachers elected to make a career change. The combination of the three factors has left local boards of education scrambling to fill agricultural education vacancies.

Before I move on to the main focus of this article, I would like to report that the prospects are much better for 2004-2005. We have five students scheduled to student teach during fall semester and ten students are scheduled to student teach during spring semester.

On the national level, the shortage of teachers is an annual event. According to a report by Camp, Broyles, and Skelton (2002), positions have gone unfilled every year since 1977 because of the shortage of qualified teachers. At one point this summer I counted nearly forty position posted

in West Virginia and its adjacent states. There is a need for qualified agricultural education teachers in the United States. The shortage is exacerbated by the fact that we do a good job preparing our students. Individuals certified to teach are equally prepared for many other positions. Hovatter (2002) found that fifty percent of the students who completed teacher certification requirements in the states served by the Five-Star Consortium took positions other than teaching.

That brings me to the title of the article that I borrowed from the United States Marines and paraphrased: send us "a few good students." West Virginia's agriculture education teachers send many good students to the Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Consumer Sciences and a number of these students major in Agricultural and Environmental Education. With some additional efforts this number can be increased. Encourage your best students to follow in your footsteps. Show them how teaching agricultural education can be challenging and rewarding.

The National FFA Organization lists the following benefits of being an Agriculture Teacher?

- Personal gratification associated with helping young people

- Work with the community and be able to give back to society
- Interesting subject matter
- Casual environment compared to business and corporate world
- Job security and stable income
- Expose students to new subject matter
- Change attitudes/stereotypes about agriculture
- Opportunity to participate in FFA
- Ability to be a Mentor to students
- Variety and innovation associated with the profession
- The opportunity to share knowledge learned in past experiences.

A final selling point is the other career opportunities that are available with a degree in Agricultural and Environmental Education. In the event the student completes the degree and elects not to teach, a number of potential employers await including agribusiness, production agriculture, and agriculture related government agencies.

I encourage you to send us more of your best students.

(For additional information about a career as an agriculture education teacher, write me at P.O. Box 6108, Morgantown, WV 26506, call me at (304)293-4832, or email me at hnboone@wvu.edu.)

Agricultural and Environmental Education Alumni Profiles

D. Mitchell Fincham, 2004 WVAAE Outstanding Teacher

Enthusiastic, motivated, inspiring . . . these are just a few words that describe an Outstanding Teacher. The NAAE Outstanding Teacher Awards go to agriculture teachers that have kept a tradition of excellence in their program along with the inborn love for agriculture. D. Mitchell Fincham was selected as the 2004 West Virginia Association of Agricultural Educator's Outstanding Teacher. He will compete with other state winners from the northeast for the Region 6 NAAE Outstanding Teacher Award.

D. Mitchell Fincham was married to his late wife, Cindy, for almost 32 years¹. They are the parents of four children and two grand children (The third grandchild is expected in September.).

Mr. Fincham has been an agriculture education teacher for 32 years. He began his teaching career at Charles Town Junior High School in July of 1972, went to Point Pleasant Vocational Center in July of 1975, and moved back to Charles Town Jr. HS in January of 1976. He moved from there to Jefferson High School in July of 1983 where he is currently employed. The Jefferson County High School program consists of the 9th Grade Complex and three Middle

Schools, and a comprehensive high school. The program employs five teachers.

Mitch has received numerous awards over his teaching career including both the Honorary WV State and American FFA Degrees; Teacher of the Year for Jefferson High School; and the West Virginia Southern States Leadership Award. His students have been active in local, state, and national events. Numerous State and American FFA Degrees and Top Six National Chapter awards provide evidence of their accomplishments. Five of his students have gone on to teach agricultural education.

In addition to his teaching career, Mr. Fincham has taken the time to serve the local community and his profession on the state and national levels. His service activities have included service on the Jefferson County Fair Board, Chairman of the Jefferson County Fair Youth Agriculture Division, judged the Preliminary National FFA Creed Contest, and served as President of the West Virginia Agricultural Teachers Association.

Mr. Fincham's advice to the profession is reflected in the following statement: "I

have always believed that we need to place our students in a position to succeed and to encourage them to achieve their goals. I was very fortunate for the last 32 years

to have someone who believed in me and wanted me to be happy and successful with my career. If you do not have someone who believes in you, you will not take pleasure in those little things in life which keeps you focused. Remember, you must balance your career and family to be a truly well rounded individual and you must keep your faith strong in God."

¹(Cindy Fincham passed away June 25, 2004)

(D. Mitchell Fincham is an agricultural education teacher at Jefferson County High School, Shenandoah Junction, WV. He received Bachelor of Science (1971) and Master of Science (1986) degrees in Agricultural Education from West Virginia University.)



Transitions

Individual

Deanna Ammons
Shannon Boswell
Matthew Call
Craig Canterbury
Jeff Carpenter
Adam Cook
Charles DeBerry
Danny Dewhurst
Thomas Elliot
Jeremy Greene
Arthur Halderman
Matthew Knopp
Carl Larew
Carla Lutz Mullins
Marvin McClung
William Reaser
Roger Shaver
William West
Crystal Wright
Dana Young

Former Position

WVU Student
Gilmer County HS
Jefferson HS
Ohio
Hedgesville HS
Mineral County Technical Ed. Center
Hannan High School
Monongalia Technical Ed. Center
Winchester HS (VA)

WVU Student
Preston County HS

Fayette Plateau
Ritchie County HS
Wood County Technical Center
Ripley HS
Monongalia Technical Ed. Center
Industry

Current Position

Ritchie County HS
Summers County HS
Asst. Principal, Braxton County HS
Ripley HS
Preston County HS
Resigned Position
Resigned Position
Southern HS, Ohio
Resigned Position
Jefferson High School
East Hardy HS (1/2 Time)
Wood County Technical Center
Retired
Hannan HS
Retired
Resigned Position
Retired
Retired
Full-Time Science Position
Mineral County Technical Ed. Center

Local Agricultural Education Advisory Committees

by Leon Ammons

The Agricultural Advisory Committee in Tyler County is unique in the way it currently operates. Yes, the committee existed when I started my teaching position in the fall of 1996. Two weeks into the school year we had our first Advisory Committee meeting with about ten people. These were the first ten people I could use as resources in the community because they were the only people in the community that I knew. During the first meeting they decided to meet monthly during the school year, the second Thursday of every month. We still meet monthly to discuss activities of the program and the FFA. So many times you will hear teachers say they need to get an advisory committee organized to fight some sort of problem. If you wait until a problem exists and only use an Advisory Committee as a pressure group, the group will struggle to exist.

The Tyler County Advisory Committee meets regularly to keep its members informed and up to date on changes within the program and to give members an opportunity to express concerns. I have never had to use them as a pressure group because their continued presence has more power than we all realize.

I have always invited the County Superintendent to the meetings so that s/he would be aware of the topics being ad-

ressed at the meeting. It's also important to expect your principal to be present at the meetings. If you get the right people on the committee they will attend. For example, I have two board of education members on the committee as well as parents of present and past students. We address the membership of the Committee at the beginning of each school year. This allows people to take a break from the committee. The addition of new people brings fresh ideas to the group.

My committee is larger than what most people thinks it should be, mainly because we have tried to have a cross section of Tyler County including farmers, politicians, parents and high school teachers.

Yes, the Advisory Committee is another meeting I need to attend every month, however, the benefits have been endless. Their presence has influenced the County Board of Education to build a \$250,000 dollar meats processing facility with no questions asked. The Committee has helped me get and maintain a 40 day extended contract allowing student supervision during the summer. Their willingness to help recruit new students has had a tremendous impact on the enrollment in the Agriculture Education program. The March meeting is scheduled on the date for the Ham & Bacon Sale in Tyler County,

therefore the meeting involves the Committee helping with the sale.

In today's world you need an active Agricultural Advisory committee

to help the program get through the challenges that we all face daily. If the committee had not existed when I came here, I probably would not have a committee. After spending eight years with them, I am convinced it's their support that has allowed this program to grow and be successful. Don't be afraid. Yes it's awkward at first, but they will truly appreciate the opportunity to listen and provide you with advice. If you have any questions or comments about starting an Agricultural Advisory Committee please give me a call or come and attend a meeting.

(Leon Ammons is an agricultural education teacher at Tyler Consolidated High School, Sistersville, WV. He received Bachelor of Science (1995) and Master of Science (1997) degrees in Agricultural Education from West Virginia University.)



Seth Gartin Joins the AGEE Faculty as a Visiting Instructor

Seth Gartin recently joined the WVU AGEE faculty as a Visiting Instructor. He will be responsible for teaching the computer applications courses in the department. He prepared the following summary of his experiences and philosophy.

Seth Gartin, Owner and President of Raining Design and Technology, has joined the faculty as a Visiting Instructor for the 2004-05 school year. He will be responsible for teaching the Microcomputers in Agricultural Education courses.

As owner and president of Raining for the past four years, Seth has designed websites, on-line shopping stores and promotional advertisements for business and industry. His clients include MedExpress, International ScooterCross Association, Goped Super Store, The Sportsmans Refuge,

WV Direct Marketing Association, Glenmark Holding L.L.C., and WVU to name just a few.

Gartin who served as a teaching assistant for the course with David Aberegg and Dr. Harry Boone has also served as the official photographer for the State Ag Career Development Events. He was selected as the WV Photo-Journalist of the Year in 1999.

Mr. Gartin also serves as Owner and President of Mix Industries, Inc., an international skiboard manufacturer and

designer. His new line of skiboards will be in stores this fall.



Improving SAEs

by Gene Hovatter

When we talk about the agricultural education curriculum, we usually consider the three main elements and how we can change one or more of them to improve the program. Let's take a closer look at one of the key elements in our classes, Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAEs). SAEs are the glue that combines the information learned in the classroom with real life situations and events. SAEs are not a simple concept. Students have many different areas and opportunities to explore.

First things first. Let's take a look at the uniqueness of SAEs. They need to be unique because of the student themselves and their personal interests, resources, and/or personal career objectives. In Barbour County we have had many different types of supervised experience programs from the traditional beef, swine, or hog operations to exotic livestock such as emus and ostriches. I have had students establish a direct fruit and vegetable market to teachers in the school. I have also had students get into turfgrass management as well as work at local feed stores.

I believe that we need to create opportunities for students in our program.

One opportunity I created is a "tomato internship." I use excess tomato plants from the greenhouse and have students create plots of tomato plants. They raise the plants for part of the profit and include their activities in their record books.

Expansion of SAE enterprises is also very critical. Without growth in their SAEs students lose the desire to achieve and fail to achieve their true potential in the program. I try to get students to expand their SAEs by having them realize that many of the FFA awards are based on successful and growing SAEs. I continually encourage student growth with positive comments and occasionally use a friendly nudge to help students expand their enterprises. Another key is communication with the parents. You would be surprised how many parents want their kids to do more with their enterprises.

Recordkeeping is a vital part of SAEs. Encourage recordkeeping by rewarding accurate and neat records. Don't be afraid to recognize students for a good record book, it will motivate others. I dedicate at least one day a month to record book upkeep and maintenance in my classes.

Th e results have been positive. Even when something doesn't work out quite right, the student has learned and matured. My s u c c e s s stories are pretty vast. I look at it this way: since I have been teaching I have had around ten state farmers and numerous students interested in their American degree. I believe those things should be used as a measurement of a program's success.



Overall, we as teachers in agriculture education have one of the greatest tools to fire a kid up and provide an education that extends into the home in SAEs.

(Gene Hovatter is an agricultural education teacher at Barbour County Technical Center, Phiippi, WV. He received Bachelor of Science (2001) and Master of Science (2002) degrees in Agricultural Education from West Virginia University.)

Daniel Shockey Joins the AGEE Faculty as a Visiting Instructor

Daniel Shockey recently joined the WVU AGEE faculty as a Visiting Instructor. He will be responsible for teaching the agricultural mechanics courses in the department. He prepared the following summary of his experiences and philosophy.

For the past two years I served as the Agriculture & Natural Resources/4-H Youth Development Agent in Edmonson County, Kentucky. During my time in Kentucky I realized that the education that I received from WVU was very useful. At first I was a bit disturbed that they did not teach me everything that I needed to know. Then I realized that my welding certificates, B.S. and M.S. degrees were a really good education to build from.

As an extension agent, you are faced with many challenges. You are the one that everybody comes to with questions. I never quit educating myself. I now have vast knowledge in meat goat production, aquaculture (fresh water shrimp), apiculture and composting/master gardeners.

I joined the Agricultural Education team at WVU to work in agricultural mechanics, which is my true forté. This fall semester I will be teaching four new classes:

- Basics of Agricultural Mechanics, which will be basic skill development.
- Shop Theory and Methods, (2 sections) which will focus more on how to teach agricultural mechanics.
- Small Engines and Hydraulics class, which will focus on the rebuilding, trouble shooting and maintenance on each.

In the spring I will be offering the teaching practica, metal fabrication and a

composting master gardener class. I think that I speak for everyone in the Ag Ed department when I say that we are all very excited about the up coming year with all of the positive moves that we have made to ensure that our graduating students are better prepared for the future.



Research Summary: Recruitment Strategies Used by High School Agriculture Education Teachers in West Virginia

by Danny R. Dewhurst, Harry N. Boone, Jr., Stacy A. Gartin and Deborah A. Boone

Public education in West Virginia is in a crisis. While national public elementary and secondary school enrollments are expected to increase, national statistics project that between 1996 and 2008, overall public school enrollment in West Virginia will decline eight percent. High school enrollment in West Virginia is expected to decline 11% over the same period (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2000b).

Combine the projected decrease in enrollment with increased academic requirements and the crisis level increases even to get elective courses. Nationally, from 1982 to 1998 the number of required mathematics courses increased from 2.6 to 3.4 and the number of required science courses rose from 2.2 to 3.1. During this same period of time the average number of courses in vocational-technical areas completed by high school graduates dropped gradually from 4.6 units in 1982 to 4.0 in 1998 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2000a).

Reduced enrollment and increased academic requirements have a direct impact on enrollment in vocational-technical programs, such as agriculture education, and the ability to actively recruit students into the programs. The future of agriculture education in West Virginia depends upon the ability of its programs to attract and maintain students. To date little information is known about the type(s) and effectiveness of recruitment activities used to attract students into West Virginia's Agriculture Education programs. Before exploring the future of agriculture education in West Virginia, one should examine its past. The purpose of this study was to determine the types of recruitment activities utilized by West Virginia agricultural education teachers and to establish their perceptions of the effectiveness of each of the recruitment activities.

A descriptive research design was used for this study. The target population of this study was 97 agricultural education teachers who were employed in West Virginia during the 2000-2001 school year. A census of the population was used. Data for this study were obtained using two mail questionnaires and a modified Delphi technique. In Phase I, a

cover letter and questionnaire was mailed to the target population. The questionnaire consisted of an open-ended questionnaire that asked agricultural education teachers to list the top three recruitment strategies used in their agricultural education programs. Phase I data were recorded, summarized, and 24 strategies used to recruit agricultural education students were identified. A second questionnaire was mailed to the population of agricultural education teachers in West Virginia to identify the number of times during the past four years the teacher used each of the twenty-four recruitment strategies identified during Phase I. Using a Likert scale, teachers were also asked to rate the effectiveness of each activity on its ability to attract students into the agricultural education program. A Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was calculated using data from Phase II of the study. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was .97.

Phase One. Twenty-four recruitment activities were identified during Phase I of the research process. The recruitment activities included:

- Eighth grade tours,
- Department open houses,
- FFA officers visit elementary schools,
- Teaching agriculture classes in middle school,
- Talking to potential agriculture students at fairs and festivals,
- Educational exhibits, booths, demonstrations, at fairs, etc.,
- Information mailed to potential agriculture science students,
- Student visitation to potential agriculture science students,
- Word of mouth; students telling other potential students,
- Public relations: newspapers, TV, radio, posters, etc.,
- Articulation with other schools (middle school & high school),
- Agriculture field days,
- Fun activities for FFA/potential FFA members,
- Develop a positive relationship guidance counselors,
- Use former students to recruit prospective students,

- Community service projects,
- Provide exciting, challenging curriculum,
- Dinners, picnics, and FFA banquet,
- Send interest survey to 8th grade students,
- Telephone calls to potential members,
- Teacher show he/she is caring,
- Alumni adult farmers provide information to prospective members/students,
- Inform faculty, administration, and
- Agriculture science teachers assist 4-H members with projects.

Phase Two. During Phase II, respondents were asked to indicate the number of times each of the 24 recruitment activities were used during the past 4 years and to use a 4 point Likert scale to rate the level of effectiveness of each activity. Agricultural education teachers' use of the recruitment activities ranged from an average of once every two years (2.5 times in 4 years) to more than twice per year (8.4 times in 4 years). The ten most frequently used activities included; used word of mouth - students telling other potential students (8.4 times in 4 years); kept faculty and administration informed (7.8 times in 4 years); maintained good public relations: newspapers, TV, radio, posters, etc. (7.6 times in 4 years); provided fun activities for FFA/potential FFA members (6.4 times in 4 years); teacher showed he/she was caring (5.0 times in 4 years); conducted community service projects (5.0 times in 4 years); visited potential agriculture science students (5.0 times in 4 years); invited prospective members to dinners, picnics, and FFA banquets (4.6 times in 4 years); talked to potential agriculture students at fairs and festivals (4.6 times in 4 years); and used former students to recruit prospective students (4.5 times in 4 years).

Teachers were asked to rate the effectiveness of the recruitment activities using a four point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not Effective) to 4 (Very Effective). The effectiveness of the 24 recruitment activities ranged from "somewhat effective" to "effective." The ten most effective recruitment activities included: maintained good public relations: newspapers, TV, radio, posters, etc. (3.5); conducted community service

Research Summary: (Continued)

projects (3.3); kept faculty and administration informed (3.2); talked to potential agriculture students at fairs and festivals (3.1); used word of mouth - students telling other potential students (3.1); invited prospective members to dinners, picnics, and FFA banquets (3.1); developed a positive relationship guidance counselors (3.0); sent interest survey to 8th grade students (3.0); taught agriculture classes in middle school (2.9); and developed educational exhibits, booths, demonstrations, at fairs, etc. (2.9).

Based on information gathered from this study, the following conclusions were reached:

1. High school agriculture education teachers in West Virginia used a variety of techniques to recruit students into their programs.
2. Personal contacts with potential agriculture students were more successful than non-personal contacts. Agriculture teachers reported word-of-mouth, visitations, other personal contacts at fairs and festivals, and many other personal contacts were successful recruiting activities.
3. A pro-active agriculture education program that has a variety of recruiting activities throughout the year may be successful with potential agriculture students. Teachers need to be caring and

show that they are concerned for the potential agriculture student.

4. Another important observation from this study was the agriculture science teachers worked with staff, faculty, guidance counselors and other school employees. The agriculture teacher showed that he or she is an important part of the community and worked well with the administration.

(Danny Dewhurst recently accepted a teaching position at Southern HS, Meigs County, Ohio after teaching in West Virginia for 25 years. He received a Master of Science degree in Agricultural Education from West Virginia University in 2004. For a copy of the complete report, go to the WVU ETD project at: https://etd.wvu.edu/etd/etdDocumentData.jsp?jsp_etdId=3545.)

Motivate, Motivate, Motivate

by Ronald Hudson

SAEs are one of the wonderful aspects of the agricultural education curriculum. We should require all students to have one. Do we? Honestly now. In one word NO. It is my belief that all students will not have a SAE for one simple fact. "You can't make me."

I personally had a bad experience with a supervised experience program as a student. This led me to do things differently as a teacher. I was given a production record book by my advisor during my junior year in high school and told to fill it out. A few problems arose from this statement: 1. I was working on placement at a dairy farm. 2. When I presented this to my employer, his response was "he could go!@#%\$%#^". It's none of his business what I have on this farm." 3. I told my advisor who then approached the employer. (I was working ground at the time thank God.) 4. There was no SAE from that point on. 5. At that point I had earned and invested over \$7,500 but had 0 activities and knew nothing about the process. (The program shut down three years later)

Make sure that the student is using the correct record book for their SAE. Sounds simple enough but really think down the road and analyze what the student is actually doing. For example: if Johnny has one horse and never breeds it, the production book is not the way to go. If Johnny uses that horse for teaching riding lessons then a placement book is a better choice.

I have created a record book exercise similar to Dr. Lawrence. I go through the example with the students and when I feel confident with their ability, I turn them loose to finish it. We then go through the book line-by-line to make sure it is correct. I have learned a lot about record books by making mistakes and corrections. Everyone in class is required to do this for a major grade. When school resumes after the summer we start by going through their record books (except Ag.1) and getting them up to date. I also use Fridays for updates and reading and writing time (The wonderful NCLB). Our region has a state review workshop which helps not only the students but the advisors as well. We are able to find the mistakes early and change our way of approaching the situation if it comes up again.

When I student taught at Hundred High School, Mr. Wilkins had a list of state degree recipients on the back wall. I liked that concept and started it here at Pendleton County High School. The students look at it and say, "Well if he/she can get their degree there is no reason I can't get mine". I also do this with the American degrees and point out any star recipients.

Unfortunately, one of the biggest motivations in life is money. I point out to the students the amounts of money that can be earned from SAEs. In many cases I also point out that this income is not the same

as raising these animal or products for market prices.

Visitations are hard to do sometimes. I have really tried to make these visits like instructed in college. That is fine when your single and don't have a life. I make excuses like everyone else. When I leave school I go home and spend time with my family. This isn't to say I don't make any. I set up a support system with FFA members who are doing the same SAEs. They are more accessible and have more time than I and it also helps with forming stronger bonds between each other. If there is a problem or help is needed, I pack up my three girls and we go visit.

I started an officer-training program in the summer. This is when the officers sit down and create the year's program of activities. They identify which FFA members need to chair committees and what other requirements they may need to obtain their State degrees. Once a student earns his state degree I sit down with them and we discuss what they need for their American degree. This usually clears up the picture and helps determine if it really is attainable. The only excuse I give them is the time frame. I am constantly reminding them of what they need to be working on.

(Ronald Hudson is an agricultural education teacher at Pendleton High School, Franklin, WV. He received Bachelor of Science (1993) and Master of Science (1998) degrees in Agricultural Education from West Virginia University.)

Important Dates

Aug 23	WVU - First Day of Classes	Morgantown
Sep 4	WVU vs East Carolina	Morgantown,
Sep 18	WVU vs Maryland	Morgantown
Sep 22-24	State CDE Events	Morgantown
Sep 25	WVU vs James Madison	Morgantown
Oct 21	WVU vs Syracuse	Morgantown
Oct 27-30	National FFA Convention	Louisville, KY
Nov 2	Election day	
Nov 9-10	Beginning Teachers Conference	Morgantown
Nov 10	WVAAE Program & Policy	Morgantown

Email Addresses and Phone Numbers

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