

TEACHER RECRUITMENT BY SECONDARY
AGRICULTURAL EDUCATORS

by

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ABSTRACT

The lack of qualified applicants for agricultural education positions in secondary schools has been of great concern to those involved with the profession. Recruiting efforts aimed at increasing the number of qualified applicants for such positions have been numerous, but shortages continue, and are predicted to remain for the future. This thesis examined the influence of agricultural education teachers in the recruiting of future agricultural educators. Examination of the recruitment by current agricultural education teachers was undertaken through an electronic survey of seventy-four agricultural education teachers in Montana and Wyoming. The survey found that, although a majority of agricultural education teachers introduced agricultural education as a career option, the grade levels exposed, the frequency, and the duration of such instruction varied greatly from teacher to teacher. The study also found no clear correlation between career instruction and the number of students pursuing a career in agricultural education. Although most surveyed educators attempt to identify interested students and provided information to encourage such students to pursue careers in agricultural education, the success of these efforts is suspect.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Secondary agricultural education requires trained and motivated professional educators to maintain secondary agricultural education programs. Currently the profession is having difficulty filling secondary agricultural education positions because of a shortage of qualified applicants.

The agricultural educator shortage has a long history. In 1980, the Recruitment for Agricultural Education Committee report addressed the teacher shortage and recruitment efforts (Pals, 1980). Twenty years later, Camp (2000) completed a census of public school agricultural education programs to determine the supply and demand of agricultural educators. The census examined, in part, agricultural educator recruitment, training, and the shortage of educators for placement in agricultural education programs. Camp reports that a shortage of agricultural educators for placement exists, even though the overall number of students (in all disciplines) in educator training programs is adequate to meet the need for agricultural educators.

The recruitment of students to fill openings in agricultural education is a priority to maintain agricultural education programs. Many efforts have been made in the last twenty years to address teacher recruitment. The majority of these efforts are driven from the top down, and the importance of the role of secondary agricultural educators in recruiting future agricultural educators is often overlooked in the planning and

implementation of recruiting programs. Secondary agricultural educators are exceptionally important to recruiting efforts because they are the primary role models for most agricultural students because of the great familiarity between agricultural educator and student. Students spend many hours and, in most schools, a number of years with the same educator. Baker and Radosh (2000) state, "Sometimes, we forget how much influence we possess in regard to our students" (p. 10). In this light, the secondary agricultural educator is the first line recruiter for the agricultural education profession.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of direct recruitment for agricultural education that secondary agriculture educators are undertaking in secondary schools within Montana and Wyoming.

Need for the Study

The need for agricultural educators to fill openings in the field can not be improved without knowledge about the level of recruitment for agricultural education at the secondary and middle school level. This need is based on the level of influence that agricultural educators have on students' career choices, as well as the level of knowledge educators possess about individual students' goals and motives. "Many in our profession credit a former agriculture teacher for influencing their decision to teach" (Williams, 1997, p. 26). Agricultural educators have a great influence on students' choices. They are also able to identify the types of students who would be successful in the profession because agricultural educators are aware which students desire to live in an agriculture

setting, as well as which students would be willing to make the choice of career over substantial earning power. The agricultural educator is also able to assess the ability of students to deal with the workload that is required for a successful career in agricultural education. Personal development of a goal to become a teacher has many influences; the two most prominent influences are past experiences with teaching-type activity (19%) and past teachers as role models (18%) (Schutz, Crowder, and White, 2001). This research supports belief that agricultural educators have influence over a student's choice to become a teacher, both as a role model, and by the types of activities that involve the student in the agriculture education program. Bernhardt and McMahan (1997) state, "Successful recruitment and retention of agriculture teachers starts in the local agriculture programs. Agriculture teachers must encourage their brightest students to enter our profession," (p. 13). Accordingly, agricultural educators must be trained to recruit and provide career guidance to students who show an interest in the profession. A number of recent studies (Kotrlik 1987, Conroy 1998, and Schutz 2001) have found that the agricultural teacher, as a significant member of students' lives, has significant impact on career choice. Therefore, those concerned with the shortage of qualified agricultural educators need to equip these influential people, the agricultural education teacher, with the tools necessary to positively portray the career of agricultural educator to those students who display an aptitude and interest in the profession.

If these critical shortages are to be rectified and educator given training as recruiters questions need to be asked. How much recruitment are secondary agricultural educators doing now? Which programs have recruited the most students to the profession? How is that recruitment being done? What is most successful approach for

recruiting new agricultural educators? Finding answers to these questions will give the profession a base line from which to build programs that assist the secondary agricultural educator in meeting this ever-increasing demand for members of the profession.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were used to guide this research.

To determine how often secondary agricultural education is presented as a career .

To determine the level of emphasis being placed on the secondary agricultural education profession to their students by secondary agriculture education teachers.

Assumptions

This study was based on the following assumptions:

Recruitment efforts can be identified.

All secondary agricultural education teachers present career options.

Secondary agricultural education teachers are able to identify students with ability to be successful secondary agricultural educators.

Limitations

The following limitations were placed on this research:

The population was limited to Montana and Wyoming secondary agricultural educators.

Teachers responses will be limited by the level of importance they place on career education in their curriculum.

Limited to those secondary agricultural teachers teaching during the fall of 2004.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The history of research and reports on secondary agricultural educator recruitment is long and covers many years of effort by the profession. The first major report was the American Association of Teacher Educators in Agriculture (AATEA) *Report on Recruitment for Agricultural Education*, which reviewed the reasons for teacher shortages in 1979 and developed a set of practices to help improve recruitment. The AATEA believed the recruitment of students was important and they instituted two programs directed at secondary-level students, and one program directed at post-secondary level students (Pals, 1980). The teacher recruitment problem, however, has never been solved; (Deimler, 2004) changes in school climate and factors influencing recruitment will make the one-fix concept impossible. Most subsequent recruiting efforts, however, have continued to focus secondary and post-secondary students.

One problem contributing to the shortage of qualified teachers in the area of secondary agricultural education is that high numbers of agricultural education majors are choosing not to teach, but rather to enter other areas of employment after graduation, as addressed by William Camp. According to Camp (1997), the problem, historically, has not been that universities have failed to prepare enough graduates to meet the demand for new teachers, but that only about half of new graduates actually choose to enter teaching. It is worth noting that the same situation holds true for almost all professions. Brown (1997) concludes that the method for dealing with the number of graduates choosing to

teach is to increase the number of students enrolled in university agriculture education programs, thereby increasing the number of students electing to teach upon graduation.

The recruitment of secondary agricultural educators is really the understanding of how and when students develop career goals and expectations. Hillison, Camp, and Burke (1987), who addressed students' choosing of agricultural education majors from 1980 and 1985 stated:

A change in influencing factors occurred between the 1980 and 1985 majors. The largest shift was in the people important to the student major in making his or her decisions. This conclusion has an implication for the important people to emphasize as part of the recruitment process. The specific people influencing majors were agriculture teachers, peers and parents. Overt recruitment activities such as brochures, college recruitment programs and slide-tape presentations had little influence on majors. Recruitment efforts should be geared more to having an impact on the influential people rather than directly on the potential recruit, thus using the efforts more efficiently (p. 4).

The study by Hillison, Camp, and Burke emphasized the importance of the agricultural educator in the career choice process for students in agriculture education programs. It is notable that the study placed agriculture teachers above both peers and parents in its results. Also notable is the fact that overt recruitment activities and resources demonstrated little influence on students. The study concluded that the people closest to the student were those that had the most influence over student choices. Thus, the secondary agricultural educator was seen as of great importance in the recruitment of future secondary agricultural educators.

Schutz, Crowder and White (2001) investigated the influences that help to develop a desire to teach. They found four primary sources of influence for goals in

teaching: family influences; teacher influences; peer influences; and teaching influences. The mixture of all of these influences, as well as critical incidents, emotions, and social-historical factors (teacher status and pay) help to develop the person's goal to become a teacher. Again, past and present teachers were a primary source of influence in developing future teachers.

An additional factor that determines career choice in adolescents and young adults, according to Conroy (2000), is the formation of ideal and expected work roles internalized by a young person based on a personal and societal frame of reference. A student's ideal career is comprised of their own expectations of what the job entails, in addition to their perception of where the job fits in society's hierarchy.

A study by Wildman and Torres (2001) stated that recruitment begins with identifying the various student populations and discovering what has the greatest influence on their decision to select agriculture major. The data indicated that prior experiences in agriculture are the highest-ranked influence for students selecting an agriculture major. Students' experience in FFA and 4-H are included in this influence group; the level of student satisfaction with this experience is very often dependant on the agriculture educator. Wildman and Torres stated that the survey data provided a basis for developing recruitment guidelines as faculty in agricultural education and others seek to boost enrollment. Many students that choose a major in agriculture have prior experience and knowledge about agriculture. These students may have been exposed to some type of agriculture experience such as living on a farm or ranch, being involved with the FFA or 4-H, hunting, or working with animals. Again, the importance of the secondary agricultural educator is found to be paramount to the recruitment of future secondary

agricultural educators. The experiences of students in agriculture-related activities have a strong influence on their career choices, and as the secondary agricultural educator is often involved in programs such as FFA or 4-H, the experiences they create for students within these activities are highly influential on students.

Recruitment of secondary agricultural educators is impacted by the factors that influence students majoring in agriculture at the college level. One influence for prospective secondary agricultural educators is experience in a teaching role. This is supported by Boehm and Wilhelm (2000), who suggest if students experience being a teacher, they will understand teachers better and develop teaching skills of their own. Hopefully they will also consider education as a career option. Boehm and Wilhelm suggest that providing students with teaching opportunities encourages students to pursue teaching as a career choice.

With the continued decline in the U.S. agriculture population another possible solution to the secondary agricultural education teacher shortage is the recruitment of non-traditional people for the profession. A considerable amount of the recruitment effort for secondary agriculture education, therefore, is directed at non-traditional students. Susan Reese (2001) addresses this group in an article defining the Licensure in Education for Agricultural Professionals (LEAP) program. LEAP is a Web-based, lateral-entry teacher certification program in agriculture education. The program intends to help people with a baccalaureate in an agricultural field become certified to teach agriculture education.

A second approach to increasing the number of students enrolling in university agriculture education programs is to increase recruitment efforts in secondary schools.

Dyer and Andreasen (1997) address secondary recruitment. According to their research, students begin making final decisions about college as early as their freshman year in high school. They suggest that recruitment efforts begin with freshmen and focus primarily on sophomores and juniors. According to their research, seniors are seldom recruited, as their decisions regarding college and curriculum have usually been made by the senior year. Therefore, for secondary-level recruitment efforts to be successful, programs should focus primarily on underclassmen and interested juniors, as recruitment efforts at the senior level have a greater probability of proving fruitless.

A number of studies emphasized, logically, that current agricultural education students should be targeted for recruitment efforts. A study by Osborne and Dyer (2000) found that students enrolled in agricultural education programs in secondary schools held positive attitudes toward agriculture as a career field. Students and parents believed that there were numerous job opportunities within the agriculture field. However, the study also found that, despite these sentiments, parents were unsure about encouraging their own children to pursue agriculture as a career choice. According to Osborne and Dyer, "Agricultural educators should increase their efforts to inform parents and others about the career opportunities in agriculture" (p. 58).

Much like Osborne and Dyer, Bell and Fritz (1994) found that those not enrolled in agricultural education classes lacked information and knowledge concerning career opportunities in agriculture, and that this lack of knowledge hampered the initiation of non-traditional students into agricultural fields. They also found that coursework in secondary agricultural education programs often did not align with programs in post-

secondary schools, thus limiting the number of students who go on to pursue agriculture (and secondary agricultural education) as a career.

The aforementioned research stresses the importance of educating students on the opportunities in the agricultural field, but Kathleen Kelsey (1998) noted that educating parents on possibilities may not be enough, and that cultural gender stereotypes may also influence students' decisions to enter agricultural fields. According to Kelsey, "[career awareness and educational programs] must not only provide factual information about careers, they must also provide activities to reduce stereotypes commonly held about certain occupations" (p. 30). Therefore, career education programs may not be sufficient to persuade students to pursue careers in agricultural fields.

Williams (1997) believed that recruitment should start at an even earlier time in the student life; he suggested that several strategies should be implemented for recruiting young people into the agricultural education profession. One solution to the problem is molding current middle and high school students with teaching experiences, who are the agriculturalists of the future.

The American Association for Employment in Education report (2000) on educator supply and demand for the year 2000 showed that secondary agriculture education shortages range from "some" to "considerable" in all demographic areas of the United States. The report addressed the primary reasons for shortages are early and routine retirement of staff, working conditions, and salaries. The report also examined the number of students in teacher preparation programs compared to the number of expected openings. The report shows that the shortage will continue at about the same rate in

following years. However the report was not able to determine the number of students that would enter the teaching field.

Deimler (2004) addressed the primary concern for agricultural education from a state supervisor's viewpoint. According to Deimler, the teacher shortage is the number one issue facing the agricultural education program today and the aforementioned studies indicate there will continue to be shortage of qualified teachers in the future. He stated, "Our future depends upon many variables, however, the bottom line is, if we do not have teachers in the classroom, we do not have a program" (par. 1). Classroom teachers have direct and daily contact with the young men and women who will enter teacher preparation programs and return to high schools as teachers. Hence a teacher's actions and words will influence, on a daily basis, the students' perception of teaching as a career and consequently, influence their decision to become an agriculture teacher.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methodology used for: population description, instrument design, data collection, and data analysis.

Population Description

The selected population for this study was seventy-three agriculture teachers in Montana with active e-mail addresses and fifteen agriculture teachers in Wyoming with active e-mail addresses. The Wyoming agriculture teachers email addresses were from a list compiled by the author (Ward Cotton) no attempt was made to obtain all the Wyoming email addresses. The population was selected to represent all agriculture teachers in Montana and Wyoming.

Instrument Design

Three types of questions were used: demographic questions that determined the program demographics of each school; Likert-type questions that determined the teacher emphasis on recruiting in each school; and open-ended questions designed to indicate respondents' personal commitment to agricultural education. All questions were designed to meet the objectives of determining the amount and the type of recruitment for future agricultural education teachers that is undertaken at the high school level. The survey participants were asked to rate their level of agreement to statements by using a

four-point Likert scale with the ratings of: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

A pilot survey was conducted using a class of senior agricultural education students at Montana State University—Bozeman to determine any deficiencies or inadequacies with the instrument design. That pilot survey indicated no difficulties with the design or with the process of using the internet to collect information for this research.

The demographic information collected from the teachers included teacher's name, school name and address, teacher's e-mail address, teacher's gender, number of students in the school, un-duplicated number of students in all agriculture education classes offered, grade levels the teachers taught and years of teaching experience.

The open-ended questions were questions regarding each teacher's personal feelings about their profession.

The Likert-type questions were checked for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. These items had an acceptable reliability coefficient of 0.80. The open-ended questions were not checked for reliability, as there is no statistical method against which to check for reliability.

Data Collection

Data collection in this study was done using internet technology and a professional survey instrument produced by FormSite, an internet data collection company. With the permission of Dr. Hall Agriculture Education Specialist with Montana Office of Public Instruction, Montana secondary agriculture teachers were e-

mailed the survey instrument over Montana's Education Telecommunications Network. Fifteen Wyoming teacher surveys were individually e-mailed. All of the gathered information was then collected by FormSite as a non-biased entity, and was categorized by question. All agriculture teachers in Montana with an active e-mail address were e-mailed a survey with an attached letter (example in Appendix B) on April 13, 2004. On April 15, 2004, 15 agriculture teachers in the State of Wyoming were also e-mailed the survey with the attached letter. They were requested to return the survey by the 20th of April. On the 23rd of April, 60 participants had responded. On the 24th of April, a second letter was sent out to the agriculture teachers who had not yet responded. By April 27th, an additional 14 participants responded; at that time the survey was closed. Out of a possible 89 participant responders, 74 had responded, an 83 % return rate on the survey

Data Analysis

The data was extracted from the FormSite website, analyzed into percentages and downloaded via electronic means. The data was then analyzed using SPSS 12.0. A *t*-test was used to make a comparison of early and late responders, with no significant differences discovered in any of the questions. A non-parametric *t*-test also showed no differences. All Likert-type questions were checked for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha, questions had an acceptable reliability coefficient of (0.80). Independent *T*-tests were conducted with a CI (0.95); frequencies, mean and standard deviation tests were also conducted to cross reference answers when comparing one answer to another. Cross-Tabulation of demographic data with response data showed no demographic impact.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF SURVEY

The results of the 2004 survey were divided into three sections: (1) demographic profile of survey responders; (2) agricultural education teachers' response to questions on recruitment; and (3) cross-tabulation of data.

Demographic Data

All 74 of the respondents completed all of the questions on the survey. Therefore, the *N* in the following tables is equal to 74 responses.

Table 1 identifies the gender distributions of the respondents. Fifty-nine (79.7%) were male and 15 (20.2%) were female.

Table 1. Gender of Respondents (N=74)

Gender	Number	Percent
Male	59	79.7%
Female	15	20.2%

Table 2 identifies the enrollment of participating schools, with schools broken into five different classifications based upon total student enrollment of each school. Seven of the responding agriculture teachers (9.4%) taught in a school with less than 50 students enrolled in high school. Sixteen teachers (21.2%) were involved in high schools

with enrollments between 51 and 100 students. The largest number of agriculture teachers, 21 (28.3%), were from schools with enrollments between 100 and 200 students. Twelve agriculture teachers (16.2%) were in schools with enrollments of 200-300 students and 18 respondents (24.3%) were involved in schools with over 300 students.

Table 2. Student Enrollment in Respondents' Schools (N=74)

Enrollment	Number	Percent
1-50	7	9.4
51-100	16	21.2
100-200	21	28.3
200-300	12	16.2
over 300	18	24.3

Data were collected as to what grade levels secondary agricultural teachers were teaching, because there is variation in the grade levels taught by secondary agricultural education teachers it is possible that emphasis on career education instruction may change by grade level. Table 3 data reveals the grade levels that respondents taught. Forty-two (56.7%) of agricultural education teachers taught seventh- through twelfth-grade levels. Thirty one (41.8%) taught the traditional ninth- through twelfth-grades, while only one (1.3%) taught tenth-through twelfth-grade agriculture students. No agriculture teacher taught only seventh- and eight-grade agriculture students.

Table 3. Grade Levels Taught by Respondents (N=74)

Grade Level	Number	Percent
7th-8 th	0	0.0
7th-12 th	42	56.7
9th-12 th	31	41.8
10th-12th	1	1.3

Table 4 reflects the number of years of teaching experience of the respondents, with the data indicating that a majority of secondary agricultural education teachers (60.7%) possess at least 11 years of teaching experience. Educators teaching for more than 20 years (26) made up 35.1 percent of the respondents. Agricultural teachers with 11 to 20 years teaching experience (19) represented 25.6 percent. The smallest number of the agricultural teachers, 11 (14.8%), have six to ten years of teaching experience. Eighteen (24.3%) of the respondents had one to five years of teaching experience. This data clearly demonstrates that a larger percent (35.1) of secondary agricultural education teachers have at least twenty years of teaching experience, which indicates that more than one third of secondary agricultural education teachers are older, thus further necessitating the need for recruitment for the secondary agricultural education profession.

Table 4. Number of Years Teaching Experience for Respondents (N=74)

<u>Years teaching</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1-5	18	24.3
6-10	11	14.8
11-20	19	25.6
over 20	26	35.1

Secondary Agricultural Education Teachers'
Responses to Recruitment Questions

Table 5 discloses how respondents felt about including career exploration in their instructional program. Respondents were asked to indicate if they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree that career exploration is a part of agricultural education. Twenty-seven (36.4%) respondents “strongly agree” with the statement. Forty-four (59.4%) teachers “agree” that career exploration is part of the program. Three (4.0%) teachers “disagree” that career exploration is a part of the program. No respondent “strongly disagreed” that career exploration is a part of the program.

Table 5. Level of Agreement Regarding Including Career Exploration as a Part of the Agricultural Education Program (N=74)

<u>Level</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Agree Strongly	27	36.4
Agree	44	59.4
Disagree	3	4.0
Disagree Strongly	0	0.0

Table 6 shows the grade levels in which teachers introduce careers. Many teachers include career information in the various units of instruction taught. Hence, the data shows that careers are introduced at every grade level. Twenty of the respondents (27%) introduce careers to seventh-graders. Thirty-two of the responding agricultural teachers (43.2%) introduce careers to eighth-graders, while 62 respondents (83.7%) introduced careers to ninth-graders. Forty-three teachers (58.1%) introduce careers to 10th graders, 37 of the teachers (50%) introduce careers to 11th graders, and 38 of the teachers (51.3%) introduce careers to 12th graders.

Table 6. Grade Level at Which Respondents Introduce Careers (N=74)

Grade	Number	Percent
7th	20	27.0
8th	32	43.2
9th	62	83.7
10th	43	58.1
11th	37	50.0
12th	38	51.3

(Respondents in Table 6. could include more than one grade level, therefore, percentages do not equal 100)

The researcher wanted to know if secondary agricultural teachers were promoting their own profession during the teaching of careers to agriculture students, which Table 7 indicates. In response to the question, “Do you introduce teaching Agriculture Education as a Career?” 65 teachers (87.8%) responded that they did introduce agriculture education as a career. Nine secondary agricultural teachers (12.2%) responded that they did not introduce teaching agriculture education as a career.

Table 7. Introduction of Teaching Agriculture Education as a Career (N=74)

	Number	Percent
Yes	65	87.8
No	9	12.2

The data in Table 8 reflects the grade level that respondents introduce agriculture education as a career. The data indicates that very few middle-school-age students are informed of secondary agricultural education as a career, while the distribution at the high school level is consistent throughout grade levels. Nine respondents (12.1%) did not introduce agriculture education as a career. Eighteen respondents (24.3%) introduce agriculture education as a career to all grade levels. Only two respondents (2.7%) introduced agriculture education to seventh-graders, while four respondents (5.4%) introduced it to eighth-graders.

Table 8. Grade Level Agriculture Education Introduced as a Career (N=74)

Grade Level	Number	Percentage*
None	9	12.1
All	18	24.3
7 th	2	2.7
8 th	4	5.4
9 th	28	37.8
10 th	21	28.3
11 th	24	32.4
12 th	24	32.4

* Respondents could include more than one grade level; therefore, percentages do not equal 100.

In response to the question, “How many hours are spent on career instruction?”

Thirty respondents (40.6%) indicated they spend one to five hours on career instruction.

Twenty-four respondents (32.4%) indicated they spend six to ten hours on career instruction while 20 respondents (27.0%) spent over ten hours on career instruction.

Table 9. Number of Hours Spent on Career Instruction (N=74)

# of Hours	Number	Percent
1-5	30	40.6
6-10	24	32.4
over 10	20	27.0

Table 10 illustrates the number of hours that teachers spend presenting agriculture education as a career option. Fifty respondents (67.7%) indicated they spend one hour on agriculture education as a career. Seventeen respondents (22.9%) reported that they spend two hours on agriculture education as a career. Respondents that spent three hours presenting agriculture education as a career comprised 2.7% of the population (2). Only five (1 + 4) respondents (6.7%) reported spending five or more hours in teaching agriculture education as a career.

Table 10. Number of Hours Spent on Agriculture Education as a Career. (N=74)

Hours	Number	Percentage
1	50	67.7
2	17	22.9
3	2	2.7
4	0	0.0
5	1	1.3
over 5	4	5.4

Teachers were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, I identify students with an interest in Agriculture Education as a career, as in (Table 11). The data indicates that the vast majority of teachers identify students with an interest in secondary agricultural education, with only 12.1% disagreeing with the statement. Teachers' responses show that 14 teachers (18.9%) "strongly agree," 51 teachers "agree" (68.9%), while six teachers (8.1%) "disagree." Three responding teachers (4.1%) "strongly disagree."

Table 11. Respondents Identifying Students with an Interest in Agriculture Education (N=74)

Category	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	18.9
Agree	51	68.9
Disagree	6	8.1
Strongly Disagree	3	4.1

The researcher wanted to know if current teachers were influenced by their former secondary agricultural teacher, and if they had been enrolled in an agriculture education program. Respondents indicated that a majority of current agriculture education teachers (83.7%) were influenced by former secondary agricultural education teachers, as indicated by Table 12. Responses to the statement, "An Agriculture Educator had an influence in my career choice" revealed that 52.7% of teachers (39) "strongly agree" that they were influenced by an agriculture educator. Twenty-three of the respondents (31.0%) reported a level of agreement while ten (13.5%) "disagreed" and four (5.4%) "strongly disagreed."

Table 12. Respondents' Agreement that an Agriculture Educator Had an Influence on Their Career (N=74)

Category	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	39	52.7
Agree	23	31.1
Disagree	10	13.5
Strongly Disagree	2	2.7

How important is FFA for agriculture education? The response to this question (as indicated in Table 13) revealed that FFA is a key component of agricultural education programs. Seventy-seven percent of teachers (57) “strongly agree” that FFA is important to agricultural education, and 20.2% (15) “agree.” Two of the responding teachers (2.7%) “disagreed,” while no teachers “strongly disagreed” that FFA is an important part of agricultural education.

Table 13. Respondents' Agreement That FFA is Important to Agriculture Education (N=74)

Category	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	57	77.0
Agree	15	20.2
Disagree	2	2.7
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0

The data in Table 14 shows the number of past students who have majored in agriculture education. Fifteen responding teachers (20.2%) have no past students who majored in agriculture education. Forty-five respondents (60.8%) had one to five past students who majored in agriculture education, and 14 (18.9%) reported having six to ten

students that majored in agriculture education. No (0) teacher had over 10 students majoring in agriculture education.

Table 14. Number of Students Majoring In Agriculture Education (N=74)

Category	Number	Percentage
0	15	20.2
1-5	45	60.8
6-10	14	18.9
over 10	0	0.0

The data in Table 15 reflects the number of respondents' students who are presently teaching agriculture education. The majority of teachers, 45, (60.8%) have no students presently teaching agriculture education. Thirteen teachers (17.5%) had one student presently teaching agriculture education, and ten teachers (13.5%) have two students presently teaching. Four respondents (5.4%) had three students presently teaching agriculture education, and two teachers (2.7%) had four students presently teaching. No respondent had more than four students presently teaching agriculture education.

Table 15. Number of Students Presently Teaching Agriculture Education. (N=74)

Students Teaching	Responses	Percentage
0	45	60.8
1	13	17.5
2	10	13.5
3	4	5.4
4	2	2.7
5 or more	0	0.0

The response to the statement, “I am striving to interest young men and women in teaching as a career” reveals that a majority of the teachers 65.0%(48) “agree” that they strive to interest students to become a teacher. The responses of “strongly agree” and “disagree” are evenly split with 17.5% (13) teachers for each category.

Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the statement, “I provide students with experiences to develop qualities and aptitudes basic to successful teaching.” A high percentage of respondents (20.2%) (15) “strongly agree” and (74.3%) (55) “agree” that they provide experiences that would develop qualities and aptitudes basic to teaching. Only 5.4% (4) “disagree” that they provide those experiences necessary to develop skill basic to teaching.

Respondents were asked about providing information which enables students to explore and develop interest in teaching as a career. Ten respondents (13.5%) indicated they “strongly agree” that they provide information which enables students to explore and develop interest in teaching as a career, while (62.1%) forty-six “agree” with the statement. Eighteen respondents (24.3%) “disagree” that they provide information that would enable their students to explore and develop interest in teaching as a career, while no teacher “strongly disagreed.”

Teachers responses to the statement, “I speak highly of teaching as a career” reveals that a large number 42 (56.7%) “agree,” and 19 (25.6%) “strongly agree.” Only 13 teachers (17.5%) “disagree” that they speak highly of teaching as a career, while no teacher “strongly disagrees.”

The data in Table 16 represents the statement, “I disseminate positive information about the teaching profession to my friends outside of education.” Fifteen respondents (20.2%) indicated that they “disagree” with disseminating positive information about teaching to their friends. On a positive note, 60.8% (45) “agree” and 18.9% (14) “strongly agree” that they disseminate positive information about the teaching profession their students to explore and develop interest in teaching as a career, while no teacher “strongly disagreed.” to friends outside of education.

Table 16. Positive Dissemination of Information about Teaching to Friends Outside of Education (N=74)

Category	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	18.9
Agree	45	60.8
Disagree	15	20.2
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0

The information responding to the question making students aware of opportunities in the teaching field shows that 12.1% (9) “strongly agree,” 74.3% (55) “agree,” and 13.5% (10) “disagree.” There was no response in the “strongly disagree” category. (N=74)

Table 17 reflects the responder’s discussions about the virtues of teaching with students in the classroom. Eight (10.8%) “strongly agree,” 40 (54.0%) “agree,” and 26 (35.1%) “disagree,” with no responders in the “strongly disagree” category.

Table 17. Classroom Discussions about the Virtues of Teaching (N=74)

Category	Responses	Percentage
Strongly Agree	8	10.8
Agree	40	54.0
Disagree	26	35.1
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0

The information from the question on shaping the future of agriculture education by recruiting students into teaching shows that 19 (25.6%) responders “strongly agree” and 51 (68.9%) “agree.” The responses also identified four (5.4%) who “disagree” and no responders that “strongly disagree” (N=74).

Table 18 indicates how respondents feel they present students with the contributions that public schools have made to our democratic society. Sixteen of the respondents (21.6%) “strongly agree,” thirty-two (43.2%) “agree” and twenty-six (35.1%) “disagree,” with no responders in the “strongly disagree” category.

Table 18. Respondents Teaching Students about the Contributions of Public Schools. (N=74)

Category	Responses	Percentage
Strongly Agree	16	21.6
Agree	32	43.2
Disagree	26	35.1
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0

Responses to the statement, “I teach students about the contribution that Agriculture Education has made to the American society” shows that 24.8% (18)

“strongly agree,” 62.1% (46) “agree,” and 13.5% (10) “disagree,” with no responders in the “strongly disagree” category. (N=74)

The statement, “I participate in professional organizations to stay current with instructional strategies” received 41 responses (55.4%) in the “strongly agree” category, 30 (40.5%) in the “agree” category, and three (4.0%) in the “disagree” category, with no response in the “strongly disagree” category (N=74).

The second statement on professional organizations “I participate in professional organizations to stay current with technical information,” received similar responses. Thirty-eight (51.3%) “strongly agree,” thirty-two (43.2%) “agree,” and four (5.4%) “disagree,” with no responses in the “strongly disagree” category. (n=74)

Table 19 illustrates the responses on providing students with teaching experiences. Twenty-five (33.7%) “strongly agree” and forty-four (59.4%) “agree” four responders (5.4%) “disagree,” with one responder (1.3%) “strongly” disagreeing

Table 19. Respondents Providing Students Experiences in Teaching (N=74)

Category	Results	Percentage
Strongly Agree	25	33.7%
Agree	44	59.4%
Disagree	4	5.4%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.3%

The question “Was Agriculture Education your first career choice?” received a positive response from 35 respondents (47.2%) and a negative response from 39 (52.7%). It is interesting to note that almost half the responding agriculture educators did not chose the field as their first career choice (N=74).

The statement “I would become a better teacher recruiter if I was provided instruction and materials on how to recruit students into education” reflects that a high percentage of agriculture educators would appreciate training (as shown on Table 20). Eleven respondents (14.8%) “strongly agree,” forty-six (62.1%) “agree,” and seventeen (22.9%) “disagree.” No responders “strongly” disagree with the statement (N=74).

Table 20. Respondent’s Agreement that Being Provided Instruction and Materials Would Make Them a Better Recruiter (N=74)

Category	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	11	14.8
Agree	46	62.1
Disagree	17	22.9
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0

The information in Table 21 demonstrates respondents’ feelings about the profession of agriculture education. Only twenty-eight (37.8%) respondents consider agriculture education a professional calling, although (40.5%) thirty of respondents do consider agriculture education a passion. Of respondents, (14.8%) eleven consider agriculture education a job. Three (4%) consider agriculture education an emotional struggle and (2.7%) two believe agriculture education to be a stepping-stone to a better career.

Table 21. Respondents’ Feelings about the Profession of Agriculture Education (N=74)

Category	Responses	Percentage
My professional calling	28	37.8
My passion in life	30	40.5
A job	11	14.8
An emotional struggle	3	4.0
A stepping stone to a better career	2	2.7

The information presented in response to the open ended question, “What are the factors that you feel students consider when considering Agriculture Education as a career?” are displayed in Appendix A. The positive factors most often mentioned were the ability of secondary agricultural educators to live in small communities, and the ability to work with FFA. Negative factors most often mentioned were work-load, hours required by the profession, and salaries.

Responses to the open-ended question, “Would you recommend teaching Agriculture to your own children for a career? Why?” were mixed, with a higher number of comments in the positive. Positive responses mentioned the benefit of having a career that allows them to live and work in small communities (like they grew up in) and the ability to be involved in FFA. Concerns about the profession consisted largely of concerns over income and workload.

Cross-tabulation of Data

In order to determine if the idea of introducing teaching agriculture as a career had an influence on the number of students presently teaching, a cross-tabulation was performed. The results of the cross-tabulation are shown in Table 22.

Cross-tabulation results identify that in each category, teachers who introduce agriculture education as a career have a greater percentage of students presently teaching agriculture education. The highest percentage is in the category of five students presently teaching agriculture education. In this category, 100% of respondents (two) introduced agriculture education as a career, but the category of four students presently teaching

agriculture education has the lowest percentage of teachers 75%, (three) who introduce agriculture education as a career. This data suggests that there is no clear correlation between the number of students introduced to agriculture education as a career, and students who go on to pursue a career in agriculture education.

Table 22. Cross-tabulation Between the Number of Students Teaching and Introducing Teaching Agricultural Education as a Career.

How many of your past students are presently teaching in Agriculture Education?(19)		Do you introduce teaching Agriculture Education as a career?		Total
		Yes	No	
1	Count	38	8	46
	% within How many of your past students are presently teaching in Agriculture Education?(19)	82.6%	17.4%	100.0%
2	Count	12	1	13
	% within How many of your past students are presently teaching in Agriculture Education?(19)	92.3%	7.7%	100.0%
3	Count	8	1	9
	% within How many of your past students are presently teaching in Agriculture Education?(19)	88.9%	11.1%	100.0%
4	Count	3	1	4
	% within How many of your past students are presently teaching in Agriculture Education?(19)	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%

The data represented in Table 23 shows the cross-tabulation of the number of past students presently teaching secondary agricultural education with the statement, “I identify students with an interest in Agriculture Education as a career.” A majority of

teachers in all categories identify students with an interest in agriculture education as a career. All respondents with two or more past students currently teaching “agree” or “strongly agree” that they identify students with an interest in agricultural education as a career. This is not true for those respondents with only one past student as a teacher, as 4.1% (three) “strongly disagree” and 5.4% (four) “disagree” that they identify students with an interest in agricultural education as a career.

Table 23. Cross-tabulation of Number of Past Students Teaching Agricultural Education with Identifying Students with an Interest in Agricultural Education as a Career.

How many of your past students are presently teaching in Agriculture Education?(19)		I identify students with an interest in Agriculture Education as a career. (15)				Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1	Count	3	4	29	10	46
	% of Total	4.1%	5.4%	39.2%	13.5%	62.2%
2	Count	0	0	11	2	13
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	14.9%	2.7%	17.6%
3	Count	0	2	7	0	9
	% of Total	.0%	2.7%	9.5%	.0%	12.2%
4	Count	0	0	2	2	4
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	2.7%	2.7%	5.4%
5	Count	0	0	2	0	2
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	2.7%	.0%	2.7%
Total	Count	3	6	51	14	74
Total %		4.1%	8.1%	68.9%	18.9%	100.0%

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purposes of this study were: (1) to determine how often secondary agricultural education is presented as a career option for high school students; and (2) to determine the level of emphasis being placed on the agricultural education profession to its students by secondary agricultural education teachers. After reviewing data from the survey, there are a number of (1) conclusions, (2) implications, and (3) recommendations to be made, which comprise the three sections of this chapter.

Conclusions

Based on the data analysis and the objectives of the study the following conclusions have been drawn:

When examining the results of the data, 75% of secondary agricultural education teachers included in the study do not introduce agricultural education as a possible career choice to their students at all grade levels, and often instruction on the career of agriculture education is provided only at certain grade levels.

Secondary agricultural education teachers in this study rarely introduce agricultural education as a career to younger students, specifically seventh- or eighth-graders enrolled in their agricultural education courses. Only 2.7% of the respondents

introduce agriculture education as a career to seventh-graders and only 5.4% of the respondents introduce it exclusively to eighth-graders.

Most secondary agricultural education teachers in this study do not spend more than an hour teaching about agricultural education as a career. While 86% of the teachers introduce agricultural education as a career, they fail to spend considerable amounts time on the subject. Of respondents, 68% spend one hour on agriculture education as a career and only 9.4% percent of respondents spend more than two hours on agricultural education as a career.

Secondary agricultural educators do identify and attempt to help students become potential agriculture teachers. Eighty-seven percent of teachers “agree” or “strongly agree” that they identify students with an interest in agriculture education as a career. Of respondents, 75% indicate they provide information to identified students in attempts to enable students to explore and develop interest in teaching as a career. Eight-two percent “agree” or “strongly agree” that they strive to interest young men and women in teaching as a career.

The cross-tabulation of data regarding the number of past students presently teaching agricultural education and the number of students majoring in agriculture education identified no one factor which improved a teacher’s recruitment of agriculture education. Increased time on career education and identification of students with interest did not directly correlate with the number of former students pursuing a career in agriculture education. It is unknown the effect that attitude and the job performance of agricultural education teachers have on the recruitment of future agricultural educators.

Implications

The implications of this study are: The level of effort placed on recruitment for secondary agricultural education by secondary agricultural teachers is spread across many grade levels and at varying times in a student's school career. This implies that the career choice of secondary agricultural education may not be offered to students at the best time for them to choose a career in agriculture education. Earlier studies such as Williams' (1997) implied that recruitment should be started in the middle school grades to be a valid career choice for students, yet data from this study indicates that very few secondary agricultural educators are introducing the career of agriculture educator to students during these important years. The utility of the current career instruction method becomes questionable if it is not meeting the recruitment requirements.

A critical finding is the low hours spent on the career by secondary agricultural educators may explain one of the reasons for recruitment problems in the field. The majority of respondents (68.9%) spent only one hour on secondary agricultural education as a career choice.

Secondary agricultural educators do imply a desire to recruit for the profession. The real disconnect is between the desire to recruit and time spent actually providing career education. Increasing the number of hours teaching agricultural education as a career has the potential to improve agricultural education recruiting.

Recommendations

Current and future teachers should be taught how to present secondary agricultural education as a career choice. The data indicates that most agricultural educators desire further instruction on how to successfully encourage students to pursue a career in agriculture education.

Recruitment efforts by secondary agricultural educators need to start during the middle school years, with consistent follow-up on the students that display an interest in the field.

A study should be conducted to compare other factors, such as personality type, job satisfaction, and community influence in recruiting success of secondary agricultural educators.

This study should be repeated in other states to compare against the findings from Montana and Wyoming to determine the best time and methods to present agricultural education as a career choice.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Question 36

What are the factors that you feel students consider when considering Agriculture Education as a career?

A belief in the benefits of agriculture and/or an agricultural background. They also need to believe or express the opinion that education in general is important.

Job security, job opportunities and low pay.

Their love for agriculture and particularly the FFA.

Time line of school year. They like ag and want to give back to the industry. They have no production to go back to so they have to find another avenue to be active in Agriculture.

Lack of chance to go back to family farm and wanting to stay in agriculture. Wanting to duplicate FFA experiences to younger members. Wanting to be in agriculture and not concerned about living in the larger cities. The craving to help children. (This comes from a retired teacher)

1. Pay 2. The amount of work 3. Dealing with kids like themselves and their friends

If they had an active and productive high school aged and FFA experience to draw from.

Pay

Time on the job, community support,

The amount of time they see me putting in. money, a cowboy working out on a ranch will make more than a starting teacher.

Money

First and foremost young people see that teachers get summers off with hours of 8:00 am to 3:30. This is the biggest draw for many young people to get into teaching. Another is the ability to work in a shop with very different tasks to accomplish.

Ward I wanted to fill out this survey for you but I am a first year teacher, in a first year Ag program. When we got to SAEs and Career clusters and ag Ed came up as a career I distinctly remember not liking teaching very much that day and I really could not sell a job I felt (just that day) stunk.

Their love for the FFA Their love for Agriculture

Salary

Pay work ability

Working with young people, being independent, not the same routine, summers freed up somewhat, holidays available, good benefits, etc.

Salary, Time on the job

Desire to be involved in Agriculture Where want to live Time off with family Generalized/Versatile degree
Not much advanced science and math Involvement with FFA

Pay, time invested, FFA, rewards

Working with students staying involved in ag

\$\$\$, and time

I feel that my students look at the current status of education in our state as well as how teachers are treated in our district. At times, neither of these paint, a very positive picture for my students.

Time commitment, pay, working with students, summer time activities, competing

Pay and time

Salary Personal Interest Abilities

Most students that are graduating are looking for dollar signs and not intrinsic rewards. Many are turned off by the long hours, short wages, and lack of motivation among some students. Things they should consider are: the ability to make a difference in the lives of their students. Take advantage of the small rewards of being an individual who helps young people. Be willing to get involved in the community as a leader and a contributor.

Allot of it has to do with what they see and hear from their teachers. I know that there are times when the students understand how stressful the teaching field can be.

Don't know

Lack of information given as a career choice.

I have a lot of students who are interested in being an Ag Teacher but the most common remark is that they see how hard I work with little or no reward (as they see it) and they don't want to have a career that dominates so much of their time.

Teaching is not a high paying job and they know that. They also see the amount of hours that I spend with them and all the work that goes into it. On the other side, they see all the fun and rewards that I get.

The time commitment scares many potential teachers away!

The opportunity to work with students on a one to one basis. I also think that they look at the FFA factor.

They love the FFA experience and want to continue with it.

Discipline Salary

Time and Money

Pay, long hours, school problems

Four or more years of college. Long work hours; Poor Pay; Student-Teacher-Parent conflicts; Small budgets; growing disrespect in schools for teachers and the teaching industry.

Right now compensation for the time spent on a quality Ag Ed Program is a main concern especially in

Montana. Young teachers cannot afford to teach if they want to raise a family. Ag Ed instructor's stretch home life to the limit.

Amount of extra time required

Salary, ties to agriculture, role models, diversity of ag. ed.

Hours spent Money earned

The number of hours most ag teachers spend with their students versus the amount of pay they receive for those hours.

Money satisfaction time away from family

Are you treated as a professional(by administration and the community) Pay-if you start at poverty level pay and your children are qualified for free lunches 10 years later. Teacher need to be paid a professional wage.

They all have been told teachers don't make enough - but when I tell them my salary they are always surprised Also many wouldn't want to work with administrators - I think they hear too much bad about admin. and school boards

Pay Time Commitment

Salary Job location Interest level Need to keep in touch with the FFA program Education needed Benefits of the job

FFA Time spent with students and rapport between students and teachers.

Desire to continue working in and with the FFA and the people involved with the organization. Seen hours - many students feel that they can teach and still manage a large farm and ranch.

Doing a job in area of interest. Pay.

Hands-On Application FFA Activities Showing Judging

Passion for the FFA and Ag. Satisfaction with working students. Variety in the work.

1. Work hours 2. Income

Rewards Students

Time, interest, pay FFA

How better to serve our youth, than to teach about our food and fiber system.

Love of FFA. Enjoy the curriculum. Like their teacher. See the pay as being low. See hours as long and workload as high.

Level of \$ to support habits/way of life Area of state/country wish to live and raise family Work ethics and willingness for long hours. Ability to have thick skin & not take personally the setbacks.

1. Chance to work with young people who share a common interest. 2. Chance to be involved with shaping the future of Agriculture. 3. Chance to work with other Ag. Professionals active in the world's largest

industry.

Salary, time, commitment

Most say pay, where they get to work (town location), and the hassles of working with apathetic and low morals of average high schooler. Most students I discuss this career with say they would never be a teacher the kids are just too messed up the job would be too stressful to be worth it. Some say they love agriculture and small towns and think this might be a good career if they want to stay in those 2 areas.

Rightly or wrongly, money talks. If education cannot be competitive financially, then kids are not going to teach! The other fact is the hammering that education in general takes in the news media and from community members, really drives kids away.

I hate to say this but a senior in High School thinks about "how much money will I make." It is to bad but that is reality. I had a student graduate in Ag-Ed and teach for two years. He said that he could make more money breaking horses than teaching. He had a \$20,000 college loan hanging over his head. He liked teaching and was a good teacher but he quit to make more money farming, ranching, and outfitting. The honor that was in teaching is not there.

The success and good memories they had in the FFA.

You have to have a love of youth--especially with the changes occurring in society and education.

FFA (Giving Back to it, a motivational tool) Stipends /(FFA and Ext. contract) Work Hours Helping young men and women grow to be successful in life.

Students need to first consider the impact that ag-ed had on their life and then consider the opportunities available. They will never be for want of a job with a degree in ag-ed. Not every teaching position is filled each year and ag-ed is a good, broad degree for any other potential career.

Job force, salary, educational facilities

They should know the time involved and be committed to spend the time required. They should know that it can be a building block to other opportunities.

First make sure that you spell all of the words in your survey correctly before sending it out.

Total Number of Responses 74

Question 37

Would you recommend teaching Agriculture to your own children for a career, why?

Maybe, it will depend on what happens to the profession by the time I have children

Agriculture is the heart of our country and with out farms and ranches we wouldn't have the food products we have available today. Every student needs to learn about agriculture in order to become better consumers and voters,

Yes, because teaching is an admirable and honorable profession which shapes the future.

Yes- It is a rewarding career and has many benefits. (salary is not the greatest-- but there are many other things)

Yes, but the desire to help and work on their own would be needed as nobody is going to be there to do the work for you. I did not want to sell a career to have them find out I was painting a rosy picture. My own children opted for careers in fish wildlife and mechanics. (This comes from a retired teacher)

My oldest child is only 9 so I would have to wait and see where her interests lie. If I find that my children are interested in agriculture and working with younger people, or just have a knack for teaching, I would definitely recommend teaching Agriculture. Teaching Agriculture give a person a chance to work in the Agriculture field, with plants, animals, machinery and technology, and encourages you to stay up to date with new technologies. Working with young people, though challenging at times, is very rewarding.

Yes, If they were interested in doing something in the agriculture field and like the FFA challenge.

No

Yes if they enjoyed teaching, enjoyment from student accomplishments

YES. It has been a great life,

Yes and no. It's a struggle to survive in the ag environment because of the problems I have in farming and buying land. I hope I can help them in some way.

Teaching the past two years has been very rewarding for me, however, I work another full time job to make ends meet. I would only encourage my children or anybody else's children to enter the Ag Ed field if Montana's pay to teachers would go up drastically. There are too many other careers out in the world offering the same benefits and rewards as teaching with a lot more payback.

No but only because They already know what they want to do when they grow up.

Depends, Teaching AG is very involved and consumes a lot time. So it would be up to them.

Yes, They grew up knowing what was involved and therefore, they are better prepared.

Yes my son would like to be an ag teach like his dad

No They can make more money and have less stress in another field

Yes. Agriculture is a basic industry that is very important to our state and national economy. Take a look around - there is a need for education in and about agriculture.

Yes, if they are inclined to do so. They need to decide what is right for them. I wouldn't discourage them, but it is their decision to make.

Yes because it is a rewarding profession

I have, but they have seen some of the parents that have caused problems in the past and they don't want that.

Yes, I have enjoyed teaching, but I also want to do other things. I would encourage kids to try it.

My wife and I are both teachers, as are my mother-in-law and sister-in-law. Teachers make a lot of sacrifices and I want my children to be well aware of them. I also want my children to make educated choices and if they choose education, it will be from a love of the profession, not just to "do what the folks do".

Yes if that is what they felt they wanted to do. Teaching ag takes a lot of time and preparation away from school and growing up around an ag teacher I am sure they would understand that.

If that is what they want to do yes. However, it is their choice.

No My own children must decide for themselves what their personal interests and abilities are and what career area they choose.

Maybe. My son is only 2 months old and I want him to choose the career, which most interests him when he is ready.

At this time I feel that there will need to be a lot of changes to the entire field of teaching before I would suggest it to my children. This stems from all of the changes that seem to take away time from teaching and focus it on paperwork.

Yes, it is honorable

It would depend upon their personality and interests.

YES, great job and you see students develop and be successful in a lot more areas than just Ag-Ed because of their background in Ag-Ed and FFA

I don't push them to any career. They choose their own. If they were interested in teaching, I would but none of my children has been interested as they see how many hours I spend at it and how much I get paid.

Yes! It is a very fulfilling job!!!!!!!

Yes, because of the many rewarding and challenging things that an Agricultural Educator can do. In comparison with other teaching positions, the Ag Educator has a better chance to assist students make positive choices in life.

I do not believe my children have the background in agriculture that I had, which would make it a difficult career choice. If they would like to teach, I would do everything possible for them to teach agriculture education.

Not too sure about that at this time.

Yes. Due to the rewards of seeing students succeed and their growth. The reward of doing something

positive for the community and world. It is a profession which has a lot of flexibility. If you really look at the wage and benefits, it is not a bad living.

Maybe

No. Refer to the list above.

In actuality I could not. My children see how much time I spend away from home, in meetings, and working with other students rather than them. Yes I enjoy teaching and I think I am fairly effective, but there is a price. There are other types of employment in which a person can spend less time ON THE JOB.

Do not have children

My children experienced the amount of time I spent with ag. students and they had no desire to follow my occupation. I feel the paper work, standards and student attitudes will discourage future teachers. These comments are from A retiring teacher who has had enough.

No. There are many careers where your earning potential and job satisfaction are so much higher. Teaching is no longer a noble profession, and ag departments may soon be a thing of the past.

Yes. I had no intentions of teaching more than a maximum of 5 years with a huge maybe on that even. So I started teaching with the thought it would be a stepping stone for another career. Over the years I have investigated other options and I keep coming back to I like teaching. I would recommend this to my own children because I have been able to literally touched lives. I am the reason some kids graduated, or live in Japan with an awesome job. I would like them to feel that success.

I feel it is important to know and understand the importance of ag ed.

No, the teaching profession is under paid and treated poorly in most schools. My own children are all in professions that doubled my pay, to start.

I certainly will - because it is very rewarding and allows someone to remain active in agriculture even if you can't own a farm or ranch you can still apply the skills through your classes in production ag.

Probably Not The pay received for hours worked is less than what they would receive in many other careers. They could make a better living doing other things.

No, I think the salary is to low for the benefits that you receive and the time invested unless you are solely interested in the survival and promotion of agriculture. My children have been with the Ag teacher for their entire life, and they know the rigors of the job that has little pay. They know that it takes another job to survive. It has been the cause of many wrecked marriages because the spouses did not understand the time requirements of the job.

I don't have any children.

Yes - to spread the knowledge of agriculture is worthwhile in itself. Even if you don't teach in a school those of us in agriculture or raised around it should strive to educate others about it.

No, there are careers that require about the same or even less education that pay considerably more and are an important part of society. I believe students and my children should follow their dreams not mine.

Yes, because it is a good way to give back to an Agriculture society who has been very generous to our people.

Yes, for the same reasons listed above.

Yes. It has been a very good career

Yes

If they wanted to, If you don't want to, don't

I have and have not regretted it, It is a great profession.

Yes, But: because I am so aware of the challenges that are faced in ag ed. and education in general, I would have strong reservations about that recommendation. I am however, convinced of the many advantages to a career in ag ed, including: interesting subject material, great students, good way of life, freedom to set your own job, work at what you love, student enthusiasm for FFA, opportunities- travel, watch students grow, see leadership, keep on top of new technology, fellowship with other ag teachers, ability to do your own work on vehicles, house, ranch.

Yes, with reservations.. maybe specialty areas.. I believe some areas of nation pay well enough.. some movement to security..

Most definitely! This is the most rewarding thing you could find to do with your professional life. You definitely get to see your impact on these young people, and many come back to see you later in life to tell you of their success, their happiness in their occupations, and their excitement about going to their job each day. Very Rewarding, indeed!

Yes It is a rewarding experience but you need to work many hours to make it this career successful.

My son is 2 years old, it will depend on how much the profession has or has not changed in 20 years.

I really wouldn't encourage my kids to teach anything. However, if they are set on teaching, I see no other choice than Agriculture. It is the one kind of teaching I could have done and it is my passion. The real reason that I would not encourage my own children to enter in education, is the perception that it has in the news media. Why would you encourage your kids to go into a profession that does not allow them to have enough money to pay their school loans and then spend the next 25 years trying to beg the state and local government for money? I love my profession, but that is really a sour point for me!

With my own children the example we set is what determines their career. My oldest son is a teacher in Agriculture Education. My second oldest son is in college studying to be an elementary teacher. My daughter will graduate from college with a degree in Landscape Architecture and Horticulture. As parents we want them to seek their dreams and we are so proud when they follow our footsteps. Recommend NO The Money is not fair for all that we do. No teacher puts more time in than a good ag teacher. The rewards are not money but the feeling that we did a good job. Is that enough for you? then it could be a career for you.

No. Emotionally, teaching is very draining and time consuming. As ag teachers, we are trying to do way too much for the monetary value we receive.

I have--their response--why spend all that time and be paid what you are being paid. My response is that you don't become a teacher for the money. Their response--yes, but you should at least make a respectable wage. (This just occurred today.)

It is a very challenging profession. I don't like to be bored and do the same thing day in and day out. What you do changes every minute and it is very challenging to stay ahead of things. It is also very gratifying. When you see that you have inspired a student(s) to achieve great things, your heart swells. There are not

many careers that can offer something like that. In fact, I don't think you can put a dollar amount on something like that either. "Reaching out to students to help them find themselves through agriculture and FFA as tools." More than anything, I believe that is what we do.

I truly believe in the benefits of agriculture education and FFA and I think that it is incredibly important to have as many people as possible in the program. I would push my child toward ag-ed but if they became interested in teaching I would encourage them to consider ag-ed. Right now there are not enough incentives to seriously consider any type of teaching as a profession. The pay is poor, the hours are long, the work is endless and the headaches are monumental. It is hard to be idealistic and be passionate about teaching when weighing those odds. There aren't enough good teachers who know that teaching is their calling and can pursue teaching for 20 or thirty years with the same intensity that is required.

Yes. It has been rewarding and enjoyable. When the salary doesn't always meet the rest of industries standards, the students successes make up for that in the long run.

Probably not. Teach yes, but not agriculture. None of my children are really interested in agriculture, though they all know it's importance.

Possibly

Total Number of Responses 74

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER AND FOLLOW-UP

Survey Letter to Agriculture Educators

April 06 2004

Dear Fellow Agriculture Educator

As a graduate student in Agriculture Education at Montana State University, I am conducting a study to determine the activities that are conducted to encourage students to become an Agriculture Education teacher. I am also interested in perceptions about recruitment and the teaching profession. I hope that this survey will lead to improvements that may help meet the demand for agriculture educators.

You have been asked to aid in this research because of your position as active Agriculture Educators. I know that time is very limited for all of us. Please take a few minutes; open the web site listed below, it will open on the survey form. After you have finished the form please hit submit. Your responses will be grouped with other responses so your comments will remain confidential. If you have an excellent recruitment idea we will gladly give you credit, but only with your permission

<http://fs8.formsite.com/sheridan1/aged/index.html>

Please complete this survey by Apr 20

Thank You

Ward A Cotton
trhswc@sheridan.k12.wy.us

Agriculture Educator

Second Letter to Teachers

Apr 21 2004

Fellow Agriculture Teachers

Two weeks ago, I sent out a survey request. Some of you have found time in your busy days to complete the survey. Many of you have not, I really need you input to make the survey valid.

Looking at the number of qualified people applying for the jobs that are open it is possible that Agriculture Education is not in danger from under funding as fast as from the number of programs disappearing for the lack of instructors. **Please help me**, Take a minute fill out the survey and hit submit.

Thank You in advance
Ward Cotton
trhswc@sheridan.k12.wy.us

APPENDIX C
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Agriculture Educator Recruitment Survey

Name School

Email

Please state gender.

Male

Female

Number of students in school

1-50

51-100

100-200

200-300

over 300

What is the unduplicated number of students in your agriculture education program?

Which grade levels do you teach?

7th-8th

7th-12th

9th-12th

10th-12th

How many years have you taught?

1-5

6-10

11-20

over 20

Career exploration is part of your program.

Agree Strongly

Agree

Disagree

- Disagree Strongly

Which grade levels do you introduce careers? Please check all that apply.

- 7th
- 8th
- 9th
- 10th
- 11th
- 12th

Do you introduce teaching Agriculture Education as a Career?

- Yes
- No

Which grades do you introduce Agriculture Education as a career?

- None
- All
- 7th
- 8th
- 9th
- 10th
- 11th
- 12th

How many classroom hours are spent on career instruction?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- over 10

How many hours are spent on Agriculture Education as a career?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

- 5
- over 5

I identify students with an interest in Agriculture Education as a career.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

An Agriculture Educator had an influence in my career choice.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

FFA programs are important to Agriculture Educator recruitment.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

How many of your past students have majored in Agriculture Education?

- 0
- 1-5
- 6-10
- over 10

How many of your students are presently teaching Agriculture Education?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

I strive to interest young men and women in teaching as a career.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I provide students with experiences to develop qualities and aptitudes basic to successful teaching.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I speak highly of teaching as a career.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I provide information, which enables the student to explore and develop interest in teaching as a career.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I disseminate positive information about the teaching profession to my friends outside of education.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I make students aware of the opportunities in the field of teaching.

- Strongly Agree

- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I have classroom discussions about the virtues of teaching.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I can help shape the future of Agriculture Education by recruiting students into teaching.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I teach students about the contributions that public schools have made to our democratic society.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I teach students about the contributions that Agriculture Education has made to the American society.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I participate in professional organizations to stay current with instructional strategies.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree

Strongly Disagree

I participate in professional organizations to stay current with technical information.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

I provide students with experiences in teaching younger students in my school.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Agriculture Education was my first career choice.

Yes

No

I would become a better teacher recruiter if I was provided instruction and materials on how to recruit students into education.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

I consider teaching Agriculture Education to be.

A. My professional calling

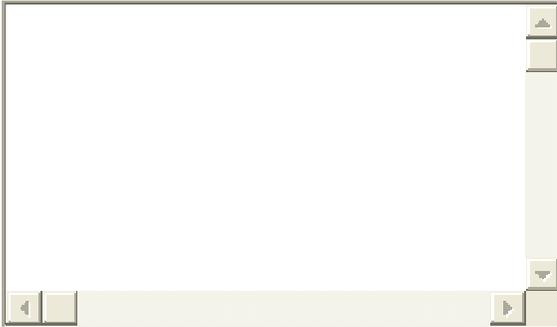
B. My passion in life

C. A job

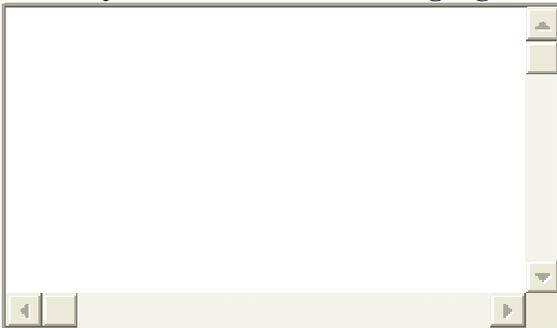
D. An emotional struggle

E. A stepping stone to a better career

What are the factors that you feel students consider when considering Agriculture Education as a career?

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Would you recommend teaching Agriculture to your own children for a career, Why?

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