

CAREER DECISIONS OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION  
TEACHING GRADUATES

by

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of

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my thesis to my family and friends who helped and encouraged me throughout my studies and research. A special feeling of gratitude to my parents, Carl and Mary Ellen Igo, who instilled in me a passion for both agriculture and teaching and have always been there to guide me towards success.

I also dedicate this thesis to my grandfather, Fred Igo. As a third-generation agriculture teacher, I am proud to continue the family legacy that you started.

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## Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they are applied in this study:

1. School Based Agricultural Education (SBAE): Provided at the secondary level for students in grades 7-12, with a curriculum focus of food, fiber and natural resources.
2. Program Completer: Graduates of Montana State University (MSU) with a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education-Broadfield Teaching.
3. Agricultural Education: Includes agricultural education in secondary schools, four year universities, and other postsecondary institutions; education and other non-formal, community education, and outreach programs; leadership development in individuals, communities, organizations and agencies; and communication within and throughout the agricultural and natural resources industries (American Association for Agricultural Education [AAAE], 2012).
4. Career and Technical Education: Prepares students to be college- and career-ready by providing core academic skills, employability skills and technical, job-specific skills (Association for Career and Technical Education [ACTE], 2014).
5. Induction Phase Teacher: Teachers with experience ranging from 0-5 years in the classroom, in which they are still learning to teach and provide the conditions, support and guidance to help them construct a professional, standards-based practice in the context of their teaching (Feiman-Nemser, Schwille, Carver, & Yusko, 1999; Sorenson, Lambert, & McKim, 2014).

## CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

The need for agricultural education teachers is a well-documented issue across the United States (Foster, Lawver, & Smith, 2017; Kantrovich, 2010; Myers, Dyer, & Washburn, 2010). Public school districts continue to struggle to fill positions, and university agricultural education teacher preparation programs deal with a perceived lack of interest in the teaching profession. Agricultural education stakeholders need current, accurate estimates of the supply and demand for agricultural education teachers to provide meaningful policy decisions at all levels (Kantrovich, 2010). Teacher educators, agricultural education organizations, and state agricultural education staff need such data as well for use in recruitment efforts (Foster et al., 2017).

Nationwide, there are 7,775 agricultural education programs employing 11,558 teachers (Foster et al., 2017). In 2016, 66 full time vacancies existed, and 245 alternatively certified teachers were hired to fill positions (Foster et al., 2017). Additionally, 175 new positions were created, as well as 149 new programs (Foster et al., 2017). With half of all school based agricultural education (SBAE) teachers leaving the profession within their first six years (Clark, Kelsey & Brown, 2014), the need is greater than ever for agricultural education majors to enter the profession and build a career within it.

Studies exploring agricultural education graduates' career decisions have been conducted at the national level; however, there is little current research for Montana. To

sustain Montana agricultural education at the secondary and postsecondary levels, a need exists to examine the reasons affecting agricultural education graduates' decisions to not enter, leave or stay in the teaching profession.

### Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to explore potential influences that shape agricultural education teaching graduates' career decisions. This purpose lends itself to three objectives:

1. Identify potential reasons behind an agriculture education teaching graduate's decision to not enter the profession.
2. Identify potential reasons behind an agriculture education teaching graduate's decision to leave the profession.
3. Identify potential reasons behind an agriculture education teaching graduate's decision to stay in the profession.

### Assumptions

It was assumed that respondents were truthful and honest in their answers during the data collection, and that graduates of the agricultural education teacher preparation program had the option to enter the teaching profession as an agricultural education teacher.

### Limitations

Limitations of the study include a population of Montana State University (MSU) Agricultural Education-Broadfield Teaching graduates from Spring 2005 to Spring 2016. Results of this study are specific to Montana agricultural education and should not be generalized beyond its borders.

## CHAPTER TWO

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

A large pool of research exists related to the national issue of agricultural education retention. To date, there is little published research focused on Montana and the reasons graduates' decide to not enter, leave or stay in the profession. In this chapter, the following topics will be examined: a) Need for School Based Agricultural Education (SBAE); b) National shortage of SBAE teachers; c) Students perceptions of teaching; d) Needs of beginning SBAE teachers; and e) the theoretical framework used in this study.

Need for SBAE

The relevancy of SBAE in the current school system is an ongoing debate. Discussion of the applicability and importance of SBAE is one that happens continually. In a world where science and business are expanding their research into food, fiber and natural resources more than ever, the need exists for SBAE teachers to not only educate students “about” agriculture, but also “in” agriculture (Mercier, 2015; Vaughn, 1999). SBAE programs reach beyond the secondary classroom and laboratory environments and enter the surrounding communities as SBAE students eventually transition into active community members (Mercier, 2015; Vaughn, 1999). Having a community of informed consumers and producers is essential in creating an agriculturally literate society (Mercier, 2015). In addition to becoming more agriculturally literate, positive

relationships exist between a student's involvement in SBAE programs and: (a) their scores on state standardized testing (Chiasson & Burnett, 2001), (b) their engagement in school and community activities (Balschwiold & Talbert, 2001), and (c) the likelihood the student will attend a two-year or four-year college (Balschweid & Talbert, 2001).

### National Shortage of SBAE Teachers

Stakeholders in the agricultural education profession need current, accurate estimates of the supply and demand for teachers of Agricultural Education to provide for meaningful policy decisions at all levels (Kantrovich, 2010). For use in potential agricultural education teacher recruitment efforts, teacher educators, agricultural education organizations, and state agricultural education staff need such data as well.

Understanding why agricultural education teachers leave the profession is an important aspect in combating this national shortage. Current and former teachers alike are generally satisfied with their teaching positions. However, if not satisfied, agricultural education teachers are most likely to leave the profession because of retirements, family and/or commitments to their children (Lemons, Brashear, Burris, Meyers & Price, 2015; Tippens, Ricketts, Morgan, Navarro, & Flanders, 2013). Additional research has shown that agricultural education teachers are most dissatisfied because of job burnout (Tippens et al., 2013). Similarly, Lemons et al. (2015) reported the five major reasons why former secondary agriculture teachers left the profession as: 1) passion for the profession, 2) alternative opportunities, 3) expectations, 4) burdens, retrospectively and 5) people. To further examine the yearly state of this national shortage, Foster, Lawver and Smith

(2017) provided a comprehensive annual report on the supply and demand of agricultural education teachers. The 2017 study found that 74% of program completers across the United States intended to enter SBAE. This is congruent with the findings of Kantrovich (2010), which found that approximately 30% of program completers chose not to teach. To address the shortage and further explore career decision making, the agricultural education profession has begun examining pre-service teachers' perceptions as they relate to teaching as a career.

### Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching as a Career

By identifying pre-service teachers' concerns related to becoming a career educator, teacher educators can better address these concerns throughout teacher preparation programs (Paulsen, Anderson & Tweeten, 2015; Roberts, Greiman, Murphy, Ricketts, Harlin & Briers, 2009; Roberts, Harlin & Brieres, 2009). Pre-service teachers have repeatedly described working conditions, self-efficacy, classroom management and lack of support as concerns of a career in education (Fritz & Miller, 2003; Knobloch & Whittington, 2002; Paulsen et al., 2015). Specifically, the student teaching experience is portrayed as a "critical period" in the development of the teacher candidate (Edgar, Roberts & Murphy, 2011) and may be a challenging time for the pre-service teacher (Knobloch & Whittington, 2002). Upon entering and completing the student teaching experience, teaching intentions have displayed either very little or no change at all (Roberts, Greiman, et al., 2009; Roberts, Harlin, et al., 2009). Addressing the concerns of pre-service teachers before they enter the student teaching experience is essential in

guiding students into careers as agricultural educators. Additionally, addressing the needs of the beginning teacher upon entrance into the profession is vital to the retention of teachers.

### Needs of SBAE Teachers

The needs of the agriculture teacher are plentiful. The needs of the teachers may also change based on their career state and experience as an agriculture teacher (Kahler, 1974). Identifying and addressing the needs of teachers in different career phases may lead to career longevity (Sorensen, Lambert & McKim, 2014; Touchstone, 2014).

Specifically, induction level agriculture teachers have indicated areas of needed assistance within classroom management (Garton & Chung, 1996; Mundt & Connors, 1999; Myers, Dyer & Washburn, 2005; Touchstone, 2014), planning FFA events and activities (Garton & Chung, 1996; Myers et al., 2005; Touchstone, 2014), utilizing an advisory committee (Myers et al., 2010; Sorensen et al., 2014; Touchstone, 2014), incorporating other content areas (Haynes & Stripling, 2014) and recruitment (Myers et al., 2005; Touchstone, 2014).

Non-induction phase teachers, or those who have five or more years of experience, have a few noticeable differences in their perceived needs. Sorensen et al. (2014) examined those differences and found that non-induction phase teachers perceived work/life balance, utilizing the Agriculture Experience Tracker record book system, organizational skills, time management, and stress management as their most important perceived needs. This stands in contrast to the needs of the induction phase teacher,

whose needs are largely related to classroom management skills and competencies (Sorensen et al., 2014).

### Theoretical Framework

Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) (1977) provided a theoretical foundation for explaining the factors associated with a program completer's decision to not enter, stay in or leave the teaching profession. Bandura's SLT (1977) posits that learning and decision-making is largely a cognitive process that often takes place in a social setting or context, and primarily occurs through an individual's observation or by direct instruction. Additionally, learning and decision-making can occur through the observation of potential rewards or punishments because of actions performed by the individual. Bandura (1977) contends that human behavior is a constant interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influencers. These three elements are reciprocal in nature, in that each one causes the other as opposed to one being dependent on the other.

Cognitive factors, also called personal factors, are beliefs, knowledge and attitudes that affect an individual's learning and decision-making. These are often influenced by past and current experiences and have an impact on the future actions of the individual (Bandura, 1977). Behavioral factors relate to the individual's responses and actions and are largely based on skill level, practice and reinforcement, and self-efficacy of the individual (Bandura, 1977). Environmental factors include the outside influences of the world around the individual, such as social settings and expectations,

peer and mentor feedback, and the attitudes and values of those around the individual (Bandura, 1977).

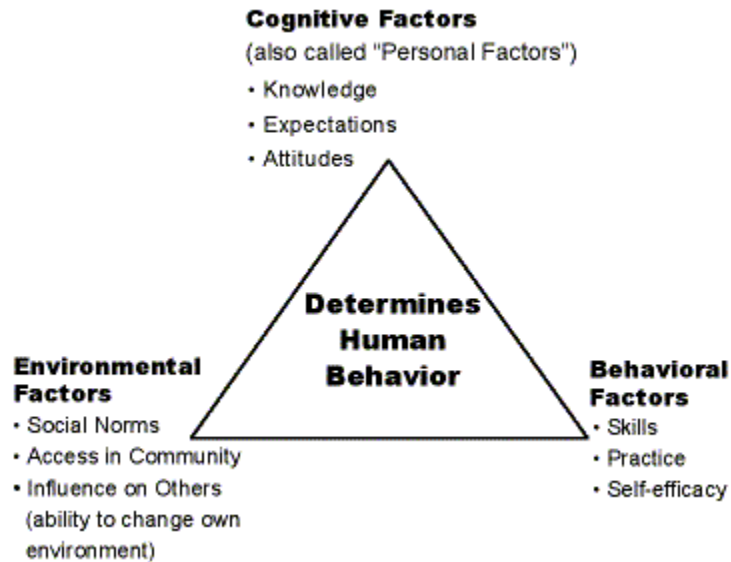


Figure 2.1. Bandura's Social Learning Theory model

Building upon Bandura's SLT (1977), Krumboltz (1979) and Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996) related SLT to how an individual makes career decisions. Specifically, Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996) adapted the SLT model to identify how four individual components interact and play off each other when individuals make certain career decisions. These components included: (a) genetic factors, (b) learning experiences, (c) performance skills, and (d) environmental conditions (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996).

The first component, genetic factors, includes the innate traits that an individual is born with. Race, sex, and physical appearance and characteristics are the observable genetic factors. Krumboltz (1979) also stated that factors like intelligence, coordination,

and other abilities may be a product of genetic traits, but are also probably linked to environmental influencers.

The second component, environmental conditions, is similar to the environmental factors as described by Bandura's SLT (1977). Environmental conditions include the world and opportunities that surround the individual. Both the number of opportunities and the quality of the opportunities are important factors. The community that surrounds the individual is an important aspect of their decision-making process, as well as the influences of the people that they surround themselves with. Environmental conditions are largely different on an individual basis, even though they may appear to be similar to those observing (Krumboltz, 1996).

The third component, learning experiences, aligns with the behavioral factors as detailed in Bandura's SLT (1977). This component describes how an individual's current and past learning experiences have a profound impact on their decisions, especially as it relates to career decision making. These learning experiences exist not only in the institutional setting like a school, but they also occur in everyday life as the individual experiences the world around them (Krumboltz, 1996).

The last component, performance skills, is framed around the cognitive and behavioral factors of Bandura's SLT (1977). Performance skills are the skills, values, emotional responses, and other cognitive processes that an individual utilizes when faced with a task or challenge (Krumboltz, 1996). These different performance skills are all influenced by the other factors, as well as having a direct influence on the factors.

Krumboltz's (1996) resulting theory, aptly named Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making, built upon Bandura's (1977) research regarding how the individual makes decisions. The Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making explains how educational and vocational preferences are acquired, and how selections of classes, vocations, and lines of work are made (Krumboltz, 1996). It identifies the interaction of different influencers including the genetic, environmental, learning experiences, cognitive and emotional responses, and performance skills that all combine in different ways to produce different decisions by individuals (Krumboltz, 1996).

Further building upon the aforementioned theories, Chapman (1983) applied Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making to the teaching profession. Specifically, the Chapman (1983) model seeks to describe and explain the retention and attrition of beginning teachers. Chapman (1983) contended that teacher retention is a combination of: (a) personal characteristics (gender, age), (b) educational preparation (adequacy of teacher preparation program, individuals performance in program, etc.), (c) the individual's initial commitment to teaching, (d) the quality of the first employment experience, (e) professional and social integration into the teaching profession (the individual's values, skills and abilities), and (f) accomplishments and external influencers (employment climate, alternative employment opportunities, etc.). Figure 2.2 represents Chapman's (1983) model of teacher retention and attrition.

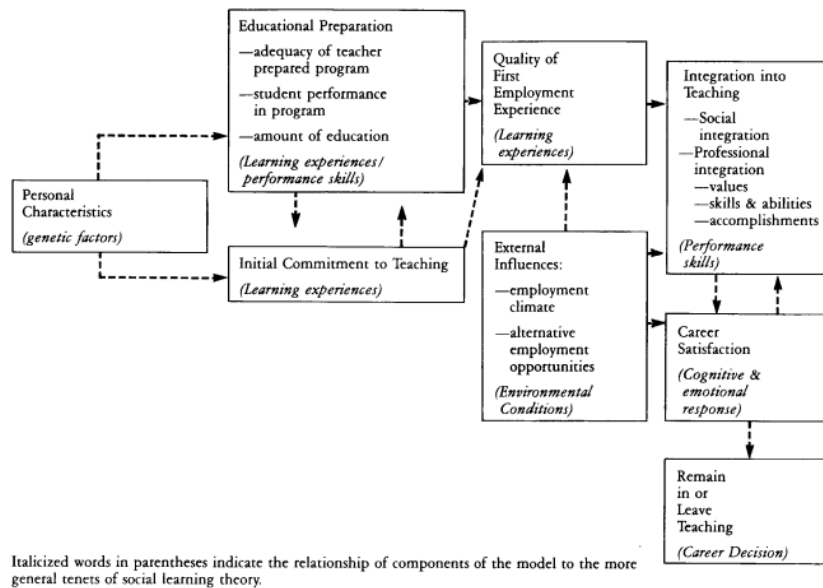


Figure 2.2. Chapman's model of teacher retention (1983)

Chapman's (1983) model begins with personal characteristics, which are similar to the genetic factors outlined by Krumboltz (1979). They both incorporate sex and race, but Chapman's (1983) model also incorporates the aspect of socio-economic status. Next, Chapman (1983) explores educational preparation. Aligning with the learning experiences and performance skills outlined by Krumboltz (1979), this influencer incorporates primarily the teacher education program that the individual completed. According to Chapman (1983), student performance, as well as the student's perceived adequacy of the program are the primary aspects of this influencer.

The third influencer is the initial commitment to teaching. The individual's commitment to teaching during their experience at the university level and in their teacher-training program is significantly related to their persistence to enter and remain in the teaching profession (Chapman, 1983). This influencer has a direct connection to the

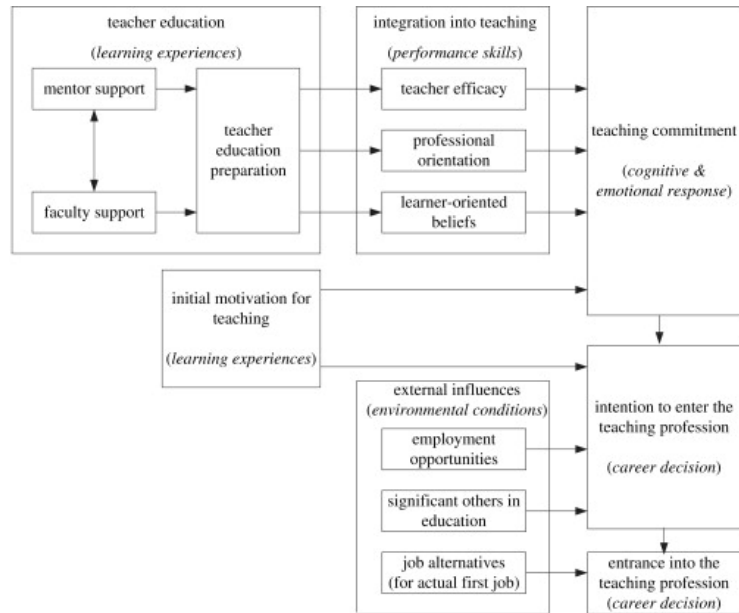
educational preparation and quality of the first employment experience. The fourth influencer, quality of first employment experience, aligns with the learning experiences described by Krumboltz (1979). This influencer relates to the first teaching job of the program completer. A positive first experience would most likely relate to retention of the individual in teaching (Chapman, 1983). This influencer has a direct connection on the integration of the new teacher into the teaching profession.

Fifth is the integration into teaching. This influencer incorporates the performance skills as outlined by Krumboltz (1979). This can further be broken down into two sub-categories, social and professional integration. Social integration is important in reducing attrition and turnover. Having friends, family and partners in the same organization, or that support and approve the new teacher, provides a positive social construct (Krumboltz, 1979). Professional integration, including the values of the individual, the growth and development of skills and abilities, and the successes of the individual, all help to foster supportive professional environment around the new teacher (Krumboltz, 1979). This influencer is directly connected to the perceived career satisfaction of the individual.

Sixth is external influences. Associated with environmental conditions as described by Krumboltz (1979), these external influences are directly connected to the last three steps of the model as the individual moves toward deciding whether to remain in or leave the teaching profession. The employment climate as it relates to available jobs and the economy, as well as alternative employment opportunities, are the primary aspects of this influencer (Chapman, 1983). Lastly is career satisfaction. This influencer

is an important factor in new teachers' convictions to remain in the teaching profession. The self-efficacy of the new teacher and their own personal feelings on their employment as a teacher are critical in this last step before new teachers ultimately choose to remain in or leave the teaching profession (Chapman, 1983).

More recently, Rots, Aelterman, Devos, and Vlerick (2010) built upon Chapman's (1983) model and the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making (Krumboltz, 1979; Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996) by framing it around teacher education graduates and their decisions to take a teaching position upon graduation. As a continuation of the model created by Chapman (1983), the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making (Krumboltz, 1979; Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996), and Bandura's SLT (1977), this new model (Figure 2.3) sought to combine these bodies of work into a single model that could be used to test the relationship between teacher education variables and an individual's intent to enter the teaching profession. Rots et al. (2010) found that relationships exist between these teacher education variables and graduates' intentions to enter the teaching profession.



Note: Italicized words in parentheses indicate the relationship of components of the model to the more general tenets of the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996).

Figure 2.3. Rots et al. (2010) model of teacher education and the choice to enter the teaching profession

Figure 2.3 represents the model as described by Rots et al. (2010). The Rots et al. (2010) model explores distinctions between initial motivation for teaching, the teacher education program, integration into the teaching profession, commitment to teaching and external influencers. It is largely similar to Chapman's (1983) model, with a few key differences in the approach and flow. The Rots et al. (2010) model incorporates teaching commitment, intention to enter teaching, and the ultimate choice of entrance into the teaching profession.

The first key difference, teaching commitment, aligns with the cognitive and behavioral factors of Bandura's SLT (1977) and references the teacher candidate's long-term commitment to the teaching profession. This step of the model is primarily a

combination of the individual's teacher education program and the individual's integration into teaching, which are the two previous steps of the Rots et al. (2010) model.

The other key differences include the intent to enter the teaching profession and the final decision of entrance into the teaching profession. These are both career decisions, which are penultimate aspects of Bandura's SLT (1977), in that they are the individual's choice and an interaction of behavior, cognitive and environmental factors. The combination of these factors, as well as the previous steps of the Rots et al. (2010) model, provide an indication of whether pre-service teachers will enter the profession and pursue/remain in a teaching career. The Rots et al. (2010) model will serve as a guide for this research.

### Chapter Summary

Examining past and current literature is important in defining scope and reason for completing research. The national shortage of agriculture teachers is among the most compelling reasons for completing this study. Determining the concerns of pre-service teachers and dealing with those before they graduate, as well as providing for the developmental needs of beginning teachers once they enter the profession, may pave a pathway for agricultural education graduates to have successful careers as agriculture educators. Using Bandura (1977), Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996), Chapman (1983), and Rots et al. (2010) as frameworks, this research intends to provide a clearer understanding surrounding the reasons MSU Agricultural Education graduates choose to not enter, leave or stay in the teaching profession.

## CHAPTER THREE

## METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore potential influences that shape agricultural education teaching graduates' career decisions. This chapter explains the study's design, population, instrumentation, and data collection procedures.

Purpose and Objectives

The focus of this study was to examine the career decisions of agricultural education teaching graduates. This focus lends itself to three objectives:

1. Identify potential reasons behind an agriculture education teaching graduate's decision to not enter the profession.
2. Identify potential reasons behind an agriculture education teaching graduate's decision to leave the profession.
3. Identify potential reasons behind an agriculture education teaching graduate's decision to stay in the profession.

Population and Sampling

The target population for this study was Montana State University (MSU) Agricultural Education-Broadfield Teaching graduates that completed their degree program between May 2005 and May 2016 ( $N=58$ ). This convenience group was chosen largely because the date range represented the most complete data, and contact

information could be provided by MSU faculty. Respondents were grouped into five separate groups to account for a variety of career decisions and circumstances:

1. Never entered SBAE teaching profession.
2. Entered SBAE teaching profession, currently teaching.
3. Entered SBAE teaching profession upon graduation, left at a later date, did not re-enter.
4. Did not enter SBAE teaching profession upon graduation, entered at a later date, then left.
5. Did not enter SBAE teaching profession upon graduation, entered at a later date, currently teaching.

The initial list of graduates and contact information was sourced from both MSU Agricultural Education faculty and the MSU Office of Planning. A master list with graduate names and contact information was then created and finalized. In accordance with Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009), the list was made and checked using the following guidelines.

1. The list contained everyone in the survey population.
2. The list did not include names of people who were not in the study population.
3. The list was well maintained and updated.
4. The sample units included were on the list only once.
5. The list contained other information that could be used to improve the study.

Finally, each member of the population on the master list was assigned a researcher generated personal code. This code allowed respondents to gain access to the

survey instrument so that the instrument could be verified to be free of responses from individuals outside of the research sample (Dillman et al., 2009). Subjects were incentivized to participate by having the option to receive a \$5.00 Amazon gift card, which according to Dillman et al. (2009), should increase response rates.

### Non-response Error

Planning for non-response error within the population is an important part of any voluntary survey. Lindner, Murphy, and Briers (2001) portrayed non-response error as individuals in the sample or population failing to provide usable responses for the study.

Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1996) suggested that if a response rate of at least 75% has not been achieved, the researcher should attempt to determine and describe how the respondents and non-respondents might differ from each other. Non-response error was not addressed in this study because data collection efforts resulted in a response rate of 79.3% and results were explicitly stated as not to be generalized beyond parameters.

### Instrumentation

This study utilized a researcher-designed survey. The researcher examined existing surveys on educators' career decisions and modified them for applicability and specificity to the field of agricultural education (Ohio Teacher Exit Survey, 2011; Walker, 2010). After initial review by the research committee, the instrument was sent to a panel of experts whose research interests involved agriculture teacher preparation and retention. This panel of experts reviewed the survey for content validity to ensure the

survey was truly examining the research objectives (Dillman et al., 2009). Multiple rounds of revisions were completed after review by the panel of experts, before being submitted to the MSU Human Ecology Learning and Problem Solving (HELPS) Lab. In working with the HELPS Lab, the survey instrument was refined and checked for both content validity and reliability. Considerable time and effort was applied to ensure that the instrument would address the objectives, as well as provide meaningful data that could then be analyzed to address the topic.

The instrument included a general demographics section, multiple choice questions, open-ended questions, and a Likert-type item section adapted from the Ohio Teacher Exit Survey (2011). Each item in the Likert-type section asked respondents to identify if the item was a major, moderate, minor or non- factor in their respective career decisions. These items were then grouped into three separate constructs to both aid in the analysis of the items and allow for more in-depth discussion of the specific items and constructs.

### Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Institutional Review Board approval was received before the researcher began data collection. The Tailored Design Method, as described by Dillman et al. (2009) was utilized as the backbone of the data collection procedures. The researcher initiated six different contacts. The population was first contacted on January 9, 2017 with a notice that they would be invited to participate in survey research. The population was then sent a link and a personal access code to enter the survey on January 12, 2017. Dillman et al.

(2009) suggests that a follow-up request be sent at least twice, being sent every week or every other week. A follow-up invitation was sent out after weeks one, two, three, five and six. For further detail, see Table 3.1. After seven weeks, responses were analyzed utilizing both Qualtrics analysis methods and exporting data to Excel and SPSS for determining frequencies, means and standard deviations and Cronbach's Alphas for each construct. With respect to qualitative analysis, Creswell's Data Analysis Spiral (2013) was used to identify general themes and categories for reporting.

Table 3.1. Time Schedule

Date	Activity
January 9th, 2017	Pre-Notice Letters and Emails
January 12th, 2017	Formal request for participation in study
January 19th, 2017	Reminder letters and emails
January 26th, 2017	Reminder letters and emails
February 2nd, 2017	Reminder letters and emails
February 16th, 2017	Reminder letters and emails
February 23rd, 2017	Final Reminder letters and emails

### Protection of Human Rights

Respondents' involvement in this study was voluntary, and they were made aware of their right to withdraw themselves from the study at any time. Coding respondents to

minimize risk (Dillman et al., 2009) addressed subject security. Copies of the completed study will be available to participating subjects upon request.

### Chapter Summary

Targeting the previous 12 years of MSU AgEd teaching graduates, this study utilized an online, researcher designed survey to gather information to explore potential career decisions of these graduates. Based off existing research surveys, the survey included Likert-type items, multiple choice and open-ended responses. The survey was completed by 46 graduates over the course of seven weeks, yielding a 79.3% response rate. Data was analyzed using SPSS and Excel and reported through measures of central tendency.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore potential influences that shape agricultural education teaching graduates' career decisions. Responses were gathered from an online, researcher-designed survey based off existing career decision surveys (Ohio Teacher Exit Survey, 2011; Walker, 2010). The target population for this study was Montana State University (MSU) Agricultural Education-Broadfield Teaching graduates that completed their degree program between May 2005 and May 2016. Of the fifty-eight (N=58) graduates that made up the population for this study, forty-six (n=46) agreed to complete the survey instrument, yielding a 79.3% response rate.

When asked to describe career paths upon graduation, respondents self-grouped themselves into five pre-determined groups. To facilitate analysis, these five groups were then narrowed into three broader groups: *never entered*, *leavers*, and *currently teaching*. The *never entered* group included only those respondents who had never entered the agricultural education teaching profession (n=16, 34.8%). The *leavers* group (n=8, 17.4%) was comprised of respondents who indicated: (1) entering the high school agricultural education teaching profession upon graduation, leaving at a later date, and not re-entering (n=7, 15.2%), or (2) not entering the high school agricultural education teaching profession upon graduation, entering at a later date, and then leaving (n=1, 2.2%). Lastly, the *currently teaching* group (n=22, 47.9%) was a combination of respondents who indicated: (1) entering the high school agricultural education teaching

profession upon graduation, and are currently teaching ( $n=21$ , 45.7%), and (2) not entering the high school agricultural education teaching profession upon graduation, entering at a later date, and are currently teaching ( $n=1$ , 2.2%).

### Demographics

As a collective group ( $n=46$ ), respondents were asked to self-identify sex, age, ethnicity, years of formal teaching experience, degrees awarded, personal income level, and final GPA upon graduation from MSU. The average respondent was a 26-30 year-old ( $n=19$ , 41.3%) white ( $n=46$ , 100.0%) male ( $n=26$ , 56.5%) with 1-5 years of formal teaching experience ( $n=20$ , 43.4%). The average respondent also held a Bachelors as their highest degree awarded ( $n=42$ , 91.3%), graduated with a GPA between 3.01-3.50 ( $n=20$ , 43.5%), and reported a personal income range of \$30,000-\$39,999 ( $n=15$ , 32.6%).

Upon further narrowing, the *never entered* group ( $n=16$ ) norm represented a 20-25 year-old ( $n=8$ , 50.0%) white ( $n=16$ , 100.0%) female ( $n=9$ , 56.3%) with zero years of teaching experience ( $n=12$ , 75.0%). Similar to the collective group, the typical respondent held a Bachelors degree ( $n=15$ , 93.8%), graduated with over a 3.50 GPA ( $n=5$ , 31.3%), and reported a personal income range between \$30,000-\$39,999 ( $n=4$ , 25.0%).

The average respondent in the *leavers* group ( $n=8$ ) was a 31-35 year old ( $n=6$ , 75.0%) white ( $n=8$ , 100.0%) individual with 1-5 years of teaching experience ( $n=6$ , 75.0%). *Leavers* displayed an even distribution of male ( $n=4$ , 50.0%) and female ( $n=4$ , 50.0%) respondents. The highest degree held by any member of this group was a

Bachelors ( $n=8$ , 100.0%). The most common final GPA of this group was between 2.51-3.00 ( $n=5$ , 62.5%). *Leaver's* personal income range was most commonly reported as between \$20,000-\$29,999 ( $n=3$ , 37.5%) and \$30,000-\$39,999 ( $n=3$ , 37.5%).

Finally, the average respondent in the *currently teaching* group ( $n=22$ ) was a 26-30 year old ( $n=13$ , 59.1%) white ( $n=22$ , 100.0%) male ( $n=15$ , 68.2%) with 1-5 years of teaching experience ( $n=10$ , 45.5%). The most frequently awarded degree was a Bachelors ( $n=19$ , 86.4%) and the most common final GPA was a 3.01-3.50 ( $n=13$ , 59.1%). Similar to the aforementioned groups, respondents indicated a personal income range between \$30,000-\$39,999 ( $n=8$ , 36.4%). Refer to Table 4.1 for complete descriptive data of all groups.

Table 4.1. Agricultural Education Graduates' Descriptive Information (n=46)

	Never Entered (n=16)		Left Teaching (n=8)		Currently Teaching (n=22)		Combined Groups (n=46)	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Sex								
Male	7	43.8	4	50.0	15	68.2	26	56.5
Female	9	56.3	4	50.0	7	31.8	20	43.5
Age								
20-25	8	50.0	-	-	4	18.2	12	26.1
26-30	4	25.0	2	25.0	13	59.1	19	41.3
31-35	3	18.8	6	75.0	4	18.2	13	28.2
36+	1	6.3	-	-	1	4.5	2	4.3
Ethnicity								
White or Caucasian	16	100	8	100	22	100	46	100
Years Teaching								
0	12	75.0	-	-	4	18.2	16	34.8
1-5	4	25.0	6	75.0	10	45.5	20	43.4
6+	-	-	2	25.0	8	36.4	10	21.7
Highest Degree Awarded								
Bachelors	15	93.8	8	100	19	86.4	42	91.3
Masters	1	6.3	-	-	3	13.6	4	8.7
Income Level								
Less than \$10,000	1	6.3	-	-	-	-	1	2.2
\$10,000 - \$19,999	3	18.8	-	-	1	4.5	4	8.7
\$20,000 - \$29,999	2	12.5	3	37.5	4	18.2	9	19.6
\$30,000 - \$39,999	4	25.0	3	37.5	8	36.4	15	32.6
\$40,000 - \$49,999	2	12.5	1	12.5	5	22.7	8	17.4
\$50,000 - \$59,999	3	18.8	-	-	3	13.6	6	13.0
\$60,000 - \$69,999	1	6.3	-	-	-	-	1	2.2
\$70,000 - \$79,999	-	-	1	12.5	-	-	1	2.2
\$80,000 - \$89,999	-	-	-	-	1	4.5	1	2.2
Final GPA								
2.00-2.50	2	12.5	-	-	-	-	2	4.3
2.51-3.00	4	25.0	5	62.5	5	22.7	14	30.4
3.01-3.50	4	25.0	3	37.5	13	59.1	20	43.5
Over 3.50	5	31.3	-	-	4	18.2	9	19.6

### Objective One

Objective one sought to identify potential reasons behind an agriculture education teaching graduate's decision to not enter the profession. Upon graduation from MSU, only five members of the *never entered* group ( $n=16$ ) reported applying for agricultural education teaching positions. Members of this group responded to 25 Likert-type items, reporting whether each of the items was a major = 3, moderate = 2, minor = 1, or non-factor = 0 in their decision to not enter the teaching profession. These 25 Likert-type items were then divided into three separate constructs to allow for comparison of similar items: (1) *Career Factors*, (2) *Teacher Training/Professional Development* and (3) *Perceptions of the School Environment*. In addition to the Likert-type items, respondents had the opportunity to provide short answer responses to elaborate where applicable.

Within the *Career Factors* construct, respondents in the *never entered* group indicated that competitive salary outside the field of education ( $M=2.06$ ) was the most influential factor in deciding to not enter the teaching profession. Additionally, being recruited for another position ( $M=1.94$ ) and inadequate work-life balance ( $M=1.06$ ) were reported as being influential in deciding to not enter the teaching profession. *Career Factor* items are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Career Factor Construct Responses of AgEd Teaching Graduates Who Did Not Enter Teaching

	N/A		Minor		Moderate		Major		Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Competitive salary elsewhere OUTSIDE the field of education	2	12.5	2	12.5	5	31.3	7	43.8	2.06	1.06
Recruited for another position	3	18.8	2	12.5	4	25.0	7	43.8	1.94	1.18
Inadequate work-life balance	6	37.5	6	37.5	1	6.3	3	18.8	1.06	1.12
Relocation	7	43.8	7	43.8	-	-	2	12.5	0.81	0.98
Career change	8	50.0	5	31.3	1	6.3	2	12.5	0.81	1.05
Competitive salary elsewhere WITHIN the field of education	7	43.8	6	37.5	3	18.8	-	-	0.75	0.77
Raising a family	0	62.5	2	12.5	2	12.5	2	12.5	0.75	1.13
Dissatisfied with reassignment or changes in the position	0	62.5	5	31.3	1	6.3	-	-	0.44	0.63
Reduction in force	1	68.8	4	25.0	1	6.3	-	-	0.38	0.62
Career break	1	68.8	5	31.3	-	-	-	-	0.31	0.48
End of contract/temporary assignment	3	81.3	2	12.5	1	6.3	-	-	0.25	0.58

Notes.  $\alpha=.483$ . <sup>a</sup>For calculation of mean, N/A=0, Minor=1, Moderate=2, and Major=3.

Respondents indicated *Teacher Training/Professional Development* construct items were not greatly influential in deciding to not enter the teaching profession. Specifically, respondents indicated inadequate classroom management training ( $M=1.00$ ) and inadequate training to support position ( $M=0.88$ ) as non- to minor factors. Likewise, it was reported that a lack of advancement in the teaching profession ( $M=0.50$ ) was not a substantial reason for not entering the teaching profession. *Teacher Training/Professional Development* factor items are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Teacher Training/Professional Development Construct Responses of AgEd Teaching Graduates Who Did Not Enter Teaching

	N/A		Minor		Moderate		Major		Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Inadequate training to manage classroom	8	50.0	3	18.8	2	12.5	3	18.8	1.00	1.21
Inadequate training to support position	8	50.0	4	25.0	2	12.5	2	12.5	0.88	1.09
Lack of advancement in the teaching profession	9	56.3	6	37.5	1	6.3	-	-	0.50	0.63

Notes.  $\alpha=.743$ . <sup>a</sup>For calculation of mean, N/A=0, Minor=1, Moderate=2, and Major=3.

Within the *Perceptions of the School Environment* construct, respondents indicated these construct items were not influential in deciding to not enter the teaching profession. Ranking highest by mean was inadequate mentoring ( $M=0.94$ ), inadequate administrative leadership ( $M=0.44$ ), and administrator actions not supporting teaching staff ( $M=0.88$ ). All items in the *Perceptions of the School Environment* construct are shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Perceptions of School Environment Construct Responses of AgEd Teaching Graduates Who Did Not Enter Teaching

	N/A		Minor		Moderate		Major		Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Inadequate mentoring	8	50.0	4	25.0	1	6.3	3	18.8	0.94	1.18
Inadequate administrative leadership	8	50.0	3	18.8	4	25.0	1	6.3	0.88	1.02
Administrators actions did not support teaching staff	8	50.0	4	25.0	2	12.5	2	12.5	0.88	1.09
Lack of supportive working environment	8	50.0	4	25.0	4	25.0	-	-	0.75	0.86
Lack of autonomy	0	62.5	2	12.5	3	18.8	1	6.3	0.69	1.01
Lack of connection to students	9	56.3	6	37.5	-	-	1	6.3	0.56	0.81
Negative culture of school	1	68.8	2	12.5	2	12.5	1	6.3	0.56	0.96
Unclear opportunities for advancement	1	68.8	2	12.5	3	18.8	-	-	0.50	0.82
Role as FFA advisor	9	56.3	7	43.8	-	-	-	-	0.44	0.51
Inadequate community support	1	68.8	4	25.0	1	6.3	-	-	0.38	0.62
Opportunities for competition	0	62.5	6	37.5	-	-	-	-	0.38	0.50

Notes.  $\alpha=.895$ . <sup>a</sup>For calculation of mean, N/A=0, Minor=1, Moderate=2, and Major=3.

Respondents had the opportunity to provide short answer responses to elaborate on career decisions. First, respondents were asked to indicate if they believed MSU provided the necessary training, skills and knowledge to become a successful high school agricultural educator. Of the 16 respondents in this group, only six indicated MSU did not provide the necessary training, skills and knowledge. Recurring themes among respondents were more time in an actual classroom with students, additional training in classroom and situational management, working with administrators and additional coursework in industrial/laboratory topics.

Second, respondents were asked to describe their intent to enter the teaching profession upon graduation from high school. Of the 16 respondents in this group, five indicated no intent to enter the teaching profession. Response frequency grew to eight when asked about intent to teach upon graduation from MSU. Further, 11 respondents indicated not even applying for high school agricultural education teaching jobs upon graduation.

### Objective Two

Objective two sought to identify potential reasons behind an agriculture education teaching graduate's decision to leave the profession. The *leavers* group responded to 25 Likert-type items within the instrument to aid in identifying those reasons. Again, these 25 Likert-type items were divided into three separate constructs to allow for comparison of similar items: *Career Factors*, *Teacher Training/Professional Development* and *Perceptions of the School Environment*. Respondents also had the opportunity to provide short answer responses to elaborate on career decisions.

Within the *Career Factors* construct, members of the *leavers* group collectively cited an inadequate work life balance ( $M=1.88$ ) as the top reason for leaving the teaching profession. Additionally, the prospect of moving to a career outside of education was a top reason for leaving. Competitive salary elsewhere outside the field of education ( $M=1.63$ ), career change ( $M=1.38$ ), dissatisfaction with changes in the position ( $M=1.38$ ), recruitment for another position ( $M=1.13$ ) and raising a family ( $M=1.00$ ) all had means

that indicated at least a minor role in deciding to leave the teaching profession. Refer to Table 4.5 for a comprehensive view of this construct.

Table 4.5. Career Factor Construct Responses of AgEd Teaching Graduates Who Left Teaching

	N/A		Minor		Moderate		Major		Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Inadequate work-life balance	-	-	2	25.0	5	62.5	1	12.5	1.88	0.64
Competitive salary elsewhere OUTSIDE the field of education	1	12.5	2	25.0	4	50.0	1	12.5	1.63	0.92
Career change	3	37.5	1	12.5	2	25.0	2	25.0	1.38	1.30
Dissatisfied with reassignment or changes in the position	3	37.5	1	12.5	2	25.0	2	25.0	1.38	1.30
Recruited for another position	4	50.0	1	12.5	1	12.5	2	25.0	1.13	1.36
Raising a family	3	37.5	2	25.0	3	37.5	-	-	1.00	0.93
Career break	6	75.0	-	-	-	-	2	25.0	0.75	1.39
Reduction in force	6	75.0	-	-	1	12.5	1	12.5	0.63	0.74
Relocation	6	75.0	1	12.5	1	12.5	-	-	0.38	0.74
Competitive salary elsewhere WITHIN the field of education	7	87.5	-	-	1	12.5	-	-	0.25	0.35
End of contract/temporary assignment	7	87.5	-	-	1	12.5	-	-	0.25	0.35

Notes.  $\alpha=.483$ . <sup>a</sup>For calculation of mean, N/A=0, Minor=1, Moderate=2, and Major=3.

The second construct, *Teacher Training/Professional Development*, consisted of three Likert-type items. Although only a minor influencer, *leavers* reported inadequate training to support the position ( $M=1.00$ ) as the item with the highest mean influence in deciding to leave the teaching profession. A perceived lack of advancement in the teaching profession ( $M=0.89$ ) and inadequate training to manage the classroom ( $M=0.63$ )

were viewed as less than minor reasons for leaving the profession. Refer to Table 4.6 for complete results of the *Teacher Training/Professional Development* construct.

Table 4.6. Teacher Training/Professional Development Construct Responses of AgEd Teaching Graduates Who Left Teaching

	N/A		Minor		Moderate		Major		Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Inadequate training to support position	2	25.0	4	50.0	2	25.0	-	-	1.00	0.76
Lack of advancement in the teaching profession	4	50.0	2	25.0	2	25.0	-	-	0.75	0.89
Inadequate training to manage classroom	3	37.5	5	62.5	-	-	-	-	0.63	0.52

Notes.  $\alpha=.743$ . <sup>a</sup>For calculation of mean, N/A=0, Minor=1, Moderate=2, and Major=3.

The last construct in the Likert-type portion of the instrument was *Perceptions of the School Environment*. Within this construct, inadequate administrative leadership ( $M=2.50$ ) and unsupportive administration ( $M=2.50$ ) rose to the top as items impacting respondents' decisions to leave the teaching profession. A perceived negative culture of school ( $M=1.63$ ), lack of supportive work ing environment ( $M=1.5$ ), and inadequate mentoring ( $M=1.25$ ) were also reported as having at least a minor impact on respondents' decisions to leave the teaching profession. Refer to Table 4.7 for a complete view of the construct.

Table 4.7. Perceptions of School Environment Construct Responses of AgEd Teaching Graduates Who Left Teaching

	N/A		Minor		Moderate		Major		Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Inadequate administrative leadership	-	-	1	12.5	2	25.0	5	62.5	2.50	0.76
Administrators actions did not support teaching staff	-	-	1	12.5	2	25.0	5	62.5	2.50	0.76
Negative culture of school	2	25.0	2	25.0	1	12.5	3	37.5	1.63	1.30
Lack of supportive working environment	1	12.5	3	37.5	3	37.5	1	12.5	1.50	0.93
Inadequate mentoring	1	12.5	5	62.5	1	12.5	1	12.5	1.25	0.89
Unclear opportunities for advancement	4	50.0	1	12.5	3	37.5	-	-	0.88	0.99
Inadequate community support	4	50.0	3	37.5	1	12.5	-	-	0.63	0.74
Lack of autonomy	4	50.0	3	37.5	1	12.5	-	-	0.63	0.74
Role as FFA advisor	5	62.5	2	25.0	1	12.5	-	-	0.50	0.76
Opportunities for competition	5	62.5	2	25.0	1	12.5	-	-	0.50	0.76
Lack of connection to students	5	62.5	3	37.5	-	-	-	-	0.38	0.52

Notes.  $\alpha=.895$ . <sup>a</sup>For calculation of mean, N/A=0, Minor=1, Moderate=2, and Major=3.

*Leavers* averaged 3.25 years in the teaching profession, with a median of 3 years.

Among this group, all members reported the intent to teach agricultural education upon graduation from high school and MSU. Further, all eight reported that student teaching highly influenced their decision to enter the teaching profession.

When asked about receiving the necessary knowledge, skills and training from MSU to be a successful agricultural educator, responses were evenly split. Four indicated receiving the necessary knowledge, skills and training, and four did not. Among the four who indicated not receiving the necessary knowledge, skills and training, common

recommendations for additional training included increased time in front of high school students, additional training in agricultural mechanics and technology areas, and more emphasis in guiding student learning.

Finally, members of this group were asked about plans to re-enter the agricultural education teaching profession in the future. Only one respondent indicated plans to re-enter the profession, citing a long enough break from teaching and the hope for a better administration as reasons.

### Objective Three

The purpose of objective three was to identify potential reasons behind an agriculture education teaching graduate's decision to stay in the profession. Members of the *currently teaching* group responded to 18 Likert-type items as part of the survey instrument and indicated whether each item was a major, moderate, minor or non-factor in deciding to remain in the teaching profession. Similar to the *never entered* and *leavers* groups, the Likert-type items were separated into three constructs of similar items. Respondents also had the opportunity to provide short answer responses to elaborate on career decisions.

Within the *Career Factors* construct, a stable contract ( $M=2.50$ ) was reported as the strongest influencer in deciding to remain in the teaching profession. Work-life balance ( $M=2.14$ ), time to raise a family ( $M=1.91$ ) and a competitive salary in their community ( $M=1.82$ ) were also reported as substantial influencers in deciding to remain in the teaching profession. For full results of this construct, see Table 4.8.

Table 4.8. Career Factor Construct Responses of AgEd Teaching Graduates Who Currently Teach

	N/A		Minor		Moderate		Major		Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Stable contract	-	-	1	4.5	9	40.9	12	54.5	2.50	0.60
Work-life balance	-	-	3	13.6	13	59.1	6	27.3	2.14	0.64
Raising a family	4	18.2	2	9.1	8	36.4	8	36.4	1.91	1.11
Competitive salary	1	4.5	7	31.8	9	40.9	5	22.7	1.82	0.85

Notes.  $\alpha=.125$ . <sup>a</sup>For calculation of mean, N/A=0, Minor=1, Moderate=2, and Major=3.

Within the *Teacher Training/Professional Development* construct, adequate training to support the position ( $M=1.91$ ) was the item of most influence, with adequate training to manage classroom ( $M=1.82$ ) and advancement in the teaching profession ( $M=1.65$ ) not far behind. Refer to Table 4.9 for more information.

Table 4.9. Teacher Training/Professional Development Construct Responses of AgEd Teaching Graduates Who Currently Teach

	N/A		Minor		Moderate		Major		Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Adequate training to support position	-	-	6	27.3	12	54.5	4	18.2	1.91	0.68
Adequate training to manage classroom	-	-	7	31.8	12	54.5	3	13.6	1.82	0.66
Advancement in the teaching profession	-	-	10	45.5	7	31.8	3	13.6	1.65	0.86

Notes.  $\alpha=.627$ . <sup>a</sup>For calculation of mean, N/A=0, Minor=1, Moderate=2, and Major=3.

The final construct in the Likert-type section of the survey was *Perceptions of the School Environment*. There were multiple items within the construct demonstrating mean scores over 2.00, indicating these items were viewed as having at least a moderate impact on respondents' decisions to remain in the teaching profession. Highest among these included connecting to students ( $M=2.73$ ) and role as an FFA advisor ( $M=2.55$ ). For full analysis, see Table 4.10.

Table 4.10. Perceptions of School Environment Construct Responses of AgEd Teaching Graduates Who Currently Teach

	N/A		Minor		Moderate		Major		Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Connection to students	-	-	1	4.5	4	18.2	17	77.3	2.73	0.55
Role as FFA advisor	-	-	2	9.1	6	27.3	14	63.6	2.55	0.67
Supportive working environment	-	-	2	9.1	8	36.4	12	54.5	2.45	0.67
Adequate community support	-	-	1	4.5	13	59.1	8	36.4	2.32	0.57
Culture of school	-	-	3	13.6	9	40.9	10	45.5	2.32	0.72
Autonomy	1	4.5	1	4.5	13	59.1	7	31.8	2.18	0.73
Adequate mentoring	-	-	6	27.3	10	45.5	6	27.3	2.00	0.76
Administrators actions support teaching staff	-	-	8	36.4	7	31.8	7	31.8	1.95	0.84
Adequate administrative leadership	-	-	6	27.3	11	50.0	5	22.7	1.95	0.72
Opportunities for competition	1	4.5	6	27.3	11	50.0	4	18.2	1.82	0.80
Clear opportunities for advancement	4	18.2	7	31.8	8	36.4	3	13.6	1.45	0.91

Notes.  $\alpha=.576$ . <sup>a</sup>For calculation of mean, N/A=0, Minor=1, Moderate=2, and Major=3.

When asked about intentions to teach agricultural education upon graduation from high school, nine of the 22 respondents in the *currently teaching* group indicated no intent to teach. Further, 17 of the 22 respondents indicated the student teaching experience highly influenced their decisions to enter the teaching profession. Of the nine respondents indicating no intention to teach upon graduation from high school, eight indicated that by the time they graduated from MSU, their intentions had changed and they planned to enter SBAE. Of the 22 respondents in this group only four reported not receiving the necessary training, skills and knowledge from MSU to be successful in the profession.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore potential influences that shape agricultural education teaching graduates' career decisions. Salaries and careers outside the field of education emerged as top factors among those who never entered the teaching profession and those who left the teaching profession. Further, a perceived lack of administrative support was among the top reasons for leaving the profession. Those who are currently teaching reported a stable and competitive contract, connection to students and the role as an FFA advisor as the top reasons for their decision to remain in the profession.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore potential influences that shape agricultural education teaching graduates' career decisions. This study sought to be a starting point for ensuring that Montana State University (MSU) Agricultural Education teaching graduates pursue and remain in the teaching profession. Examining individual career decisions will allow stakeholders to work together to meet the demands of the job market. This chapter will discuss each objective's findings and explore potential implications for practice and research.

Objective One

Objective one sought to identify potential reasons behind an agriculture education teaching graduate's decision to not enter the profession. Similar to previous research, competitive salaries outside education, being recruited for another position (Lemons, Brashear, Burris, Meyers & Price, 2015), and an inadequate work-life balance (Lemons et al., 2015; Tippens, Ricketts, Morgan, Navarro, & Flanders, 2013; Sorensen, Lambert & McKim, 2014) emerged as the largest factors in respondents' decisions to not enter the teaching profession. Referring to the Rots, Aelterman, Devos, and Vlerick (2010) Model of Teacher Education and the Choice to Enter the Teaching Profession, the majority of the aforementioned influences can be classified as environmental conditions and are thus directly related to the intent and ultimate entrance into the teaching profession.

When asked to elaborate on the necessary training, skills and knowledge required to become a successful high school agricultural educator, respondents indicated a desire for more time in an actual classroom with students and training in classroom and laboratory management. These findings align with current research (Fritz & Miller, 2003; Garton & Chung, 1996; Knobloch & Whittington, 2002; Mundt & Connors, 1999; Myers, Dyer & Washburn, 2005; Paulsen et al., 2015; Touchstone, 2014). Compounding the decision of entering the teaching profession, these performance skills enter into the Rots et al. (2010) model before individuals reveal their intentions to enter the profession.

Respondents indicated their intent to teach at multiple stages before their ultimate decision. Contrary to current research (Roberts, Greiman, Murphy, Ricketts, Harlin & Briers, 2009; Roberts, Harlin & Brieres, 2009), there was an increase in respondents who indicated no intent to teach from high school graduation to their graduation from MSU. Aligning with the Rots et al. (2010) model, this had a direct impact on the ultimate decision to enter the teaching profession.

### Objective Two

Objective two sought to identify potential reasons behind an agriculture education teaching graduate's decision to leave the profession. Similar to the *never entered* group, major factors influencing this decision included work-life balance (Lemons et al., 2015; Sorensen et al., 2014; Tippens et al., 2013), careers outside of education with competitive salaries and administrative leadership dissatisfaction (Fritz & Miller, 2003; Knobloch & Whittington, 2002; Lemons et al., 2015; Paulsen et al., 2015). Aligning with Rots et al.

(2010), these items largely fit into external influences, having a direct and profound impact on the individual's choice to enter and remain in the teaching profession.

All respondents in this group indicated an intent to enter the teaching profession upon graduation from MSU. All respondents also reported that student teaching highly influenced their decisions to enter teaching. In contrast, when asked whether they received the necessary training, skills and knowledge required to become a successful high school agricultural educator, the responses varied. Half of the *leavers* reported not receiving the necessary training, skills and knowledge. Similar to the responses of the *never entered* group, common recommendations included more time in the classroom with students, additional training in laboratory and classroom topics, and more emphasis on guiding the learning of their students. This corresponds with current research (Fritz & Miller, 2003; Garton & Chung, 1996; Knobloch & Whittington, 2002; Mundt & Connors, 1999; Myers, Dyer & Washburn, 2005; Paulsen et al., 2015; Touchstone, 2014). This also aligns with the Rots et al. (2010) model where the initial step regarding the learning experiences of pre-service teachers has an impact on each sequential stage of the model leading up to the ultimate decision to enter teaching.

Lasting an average of 3.25 years, this group seemed to experience the career burnout that is seen throughout the teaching profession (Lemons et al., 2015; Tippens et al., 2013).

With only one member of this group indicating an interest in returning to the teaching profession, it appears that if a teacher leaves, they are lost to the teaching profession as a formal educator.

### Objective Three

The purpose of objective three was to identify potential reasons behind an agriculture education teaching graduate's decision to stay in the profession. Adequate work-life balance (Lemons et al., 2015; Sorensen et al., 2014; Tippens et al., 2013), stable contracts with a competitive salary, positive student, school and community connections (Lemons et al., 2015; Sorensen et al., 2014; Tippens et al., 2013), and the role as an FFA advisor (Garton & Chung, 1996; Myers et al., 2005; Touchstone, 2014) all stood out as top reasons graduates continue to remain in the teaching profession.

The *currently teaching* group's intent to teach grew throughout their education at MSU, where upon graduation, only one member reported no intent to enter the teaching profession. Similarly, 17 of the 22 respondents reported student teaching highly influenced their decision to enter teaching. Additionally, most respondents indicated that MSU provided the necessary training, skills and knowledge to be successful in SBAE. These responses all align with the Rots et al., (2010) model, with respect to the teacher education and learning experiences step and intention to enter the teaching profession. Analysis showed that these graduates overwhelmingly felt that MSU prepared them to enter the teaching profession, but that additional training and experience in the classroom before student teaching and supplementary mechanical and technical systems coursework would be beneficial to the new graduate.

### Implications and Recommendations

Conclusions from this research provide information for those in teacher preparation at MSU, professional organizations that help with the training, professional development and advocacy of teachers, and for future academic research. The multi-year nature of this study provides a big-picture view of agricultural education teacher preparation and its effects on graduates entering and remaining in the teaching profession. Stakeholders at all levels of Montana agricultural education, including current teachers, administrators, state staff, teacher educators and representatives of professional organizations, should continue to examine the reasons presented in this study to effectively recruit, train and retain agricultural education students to help meet the market demands for agriculture education positions in Montana.

Implications for teacher educators, both within Agricultural Education and Education as a whole, incorporate responses from all three groups within this study. Twenty-eight percent of the agriculture education teaching graduates left MSU feeling as if they did not receive the appropriate knowledge, skills and training to be successful as a high school agricultural educator. A formal examination of reasons, as presented and reported in this study, should take place to understand and take action upon said reasons. The most commonly recorded critique of their time at MSU as it related to teacher preparation was the lack of time in front of students. Thus, it is recommended that faculty and staff pursue opportunities that allow pre-service teachers to spend time teaching and interacting with students. Researching the teacher preparation programs in surrounding states should be conducted by teacher educators within Agricultural Education to

examine and compare the requirements and rigor of these programs with those of MSU. Similarly, there was a perceived need for more instruction in agriculture technology and mechanical systems. Teacher educators should either implement this material into their existing courses or create new courses altogether to address this need in preparing graduates with the appropriate training, skills and knowledge to be successful as a high school agricultural educator.

Implications for professional organizations, such as the Montana Association of Agriculture Educators (MAAE) and Montana Association for Career and Technical Education (MACTE) are numerous. These organizations should take an active role in advocacy, preparation, retention and continued development of teachers. The most common reasons for not entering and leaving the profession revolve around careers outside of education, primarily the salaries of those positions. Montana consistently ranks in the bottom three for states with the lowest starting salary for teachers. Without doubt, this contributes to the loss of these graduates from teaching. Exploring fiscal opportunities to provide a competitive salary or benefits would be in the interest of these organizations. Additionally, and as described by the Rots et al. (2010) model, providing pre-service teachers with mentors and professionals within the agriculture education teaching profession would address the perceived lack of mentoring that was present in all groups of this study. Similarly, efforts should be made to work with administrators and agriculture education teachers to address the apparent issue of administrator support and its impact on the attrition of agriculture teachers. Finally, quality continued education should be provided to those who enter the field to prevent teacher turnover and increase

retention. Using the results of this study to target the needs of new graduates could lead to higher retention rates and an increased likelihood of remaining in the teaching profession.

This study was a starting point for Montana agricultural education to begin examining the career decisions of MSU agriculture education teachers. Further exploratory research will need to be conducted in order to continually assess the career decisions of graduates and the unique reasons for those decisions. A closer examination of each of the three subgroups could prove useful in determining their motivations for pursuing a degree in agricultural education, which itself could prove useful in providing a model for predicting a student's likelihood of entering, remaining in or leaving the teaching profession. This research could also be highly catered to the graduates of MSU, which might improve the quality of responses and provide more valuable data.

Research by those in teacher education is recommended to examine the courses in the teacher education program and their usefulness to the profession. Course catalogs are updated on a continual basis, but truly matching the course offerings to the needs of the agriculture educator could prove essential in providing the best education possible for students. Working with the existing advisory group, input from the Montana Office of Public Instruction and current agriculture educators in Montana is necessary to provide a teacher education program that prepares graduates to the best extent possible.

Additional research into the professional development needs of those that enter the teaching profession is also recommended. Do the needs of induction level agricultural educators in Montana mimic those of other states and areas, or are their needs specific

and unique? Catering professional development at MAAE and MACTE annual conferences and meetings to the induction level teacher's needs and concerns could provide these graduates with the supplemental skills and knowledge to encourage them to remain in the classroom.

### Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore potential influences that shape agricultural education teaching graduates' career decisions. Aligning with previous research, this study found similar reasons for each career decision as indicated by the respondent groups. A need for future research by teacher educators regarding coursework and developmental needs of pre-service teachers was identified. Additionally, implications for professional organizations to examine salary and benefits of the teaching profession and assessing the professional development needs of induction level teachers were suggested.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**  
**For the Protection of Human Subjects**  
**FWA 00000165**

960 Technology Blvd. Room 127  
 c/o Microbiology & Immunology  
 Montana State University  
 Bozeman, MT 59718  
 Telephone: 406-994-6783  
 FAX: 406-994-4303  
 E-mail: cherylj@montana.edu

*Chair:* Mark Quinn  
 406-994-4707  
 mquinn@montana.edu  
*Administrator:*  
 Cheryl Johnson  
 406-994-4706  
 cherylj@montana.edu

**MEMORANDUM**  
 .....

**TO:** Ethan Igo and Dustin Perry  
**FROM:** Mark Quinn *Mark Quinn Cxy*  
**DATE:** December 2, 2016  
**SUBJECT:** "Examining the Reasons Agricultural Education Teaching Graduates Choose to Enter, Leave, or Stay in the Teaching Profession" [E1120216-EX]

The above research, described in your submission of December 2, 2016, is exempt from the requirement of review by the Institutional Review Board in accordance with the Code of Federal regulations, Part 46, section 101. The specific paragraph which applies to your research is:

- (b) (1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
- (b) (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.
- (b) (3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) federal statute(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.
- (b) (4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available, or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.
- (b) (5) Research and demonstration projects, which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.
- (b) (6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed, or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the FDA, or approved by the EPA, or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the USDA.

Although review by the Institutional Review Board is not required for the above research, the Committee will be glad to review it. If you wish a review and committee approval, please submit 3 copies of the usual application form and it will be processed by expedited review.

APPENDIX B

PRE-NOTICE LETTER FOR STUDY, INVITATION, AND FOLLOW-UPS



**Montana State University**  
**Division of Agricultural Education**  
**Request to Participate in Survey Research**



Date: 1/9/2017

Dear Agricultural Education Graduate:

In order for the Montana State University (MSU) Agricultural Education program to effectively determine the needs of the profession, we are conducting a follow-up survey of all graduates of the agricultural education program from the previous twelve years. The purpose of this survey is to determine possible reasons MSU Agricultural Education Broadfield Teaching graduates chose to enter, leave or stay in the teaching profession.

Your response to this survey is crucial in providing the necessary information to best prepare our future graduates for a successful transition into a career as an agricultural educator. In the next few days you will receive a request to participate in this research.

We are writing in advance because many people like to know ahead of time that they will be asked to fill out a survey. We desire to do everything we can, within our power, to make it easy and enjoyable for you to participate in the study. This research can only be successful with the generous help of people like you.

To say thanks, you will receive a small token of appreciation once you have completed the survey. We hope that you will take 20-30 minutes of your time to help us. Most of all, we hope that you enjoy the survey and the opportunity to voice your thoughts and opinions.

Sincerely,

Ethan A. Igo  
 Montana State University-Bozeman  
 Division of Agricultural Education  
 228 Linfield Hall  
 Bozeman, MT 59717  
 (406) 994-7463

Dustin K. Perry, Ph.D.  
 Montana State University  
 Division of Agricultural Education  
 230 Linfield Hall  
 Bozeman, MT 59717  
 (406) 994-5773

Carl G. Igo, Ph.D.  
 Montana State University  
 Division of Agricultural Education  
 230 Linfield Hall  
 Bozeman, MT 59717  
 (406) 994-3693



**Montana State University  
Division of Agricultural Education  
Request to Participate in Survey Research**



Date: 1/11/2017

Dear :

We are writing to ask for your participation in a survey that will help the Montana State University (MSU) Agricultural Education program determine the needs of the profession. The purpose of this survey is to determine possible reasons MSU Agricultural Education Broadfield Teaching graduates chose to enter, leave or stay in the teaching profession.

Your response to this survey is important in providing information to best prepare our future graduate for a successful transition into a career as an agricultural educator.

This is a short survey and should take no more than 30 minutes to complete. Please click on the link below to go to the survey website (or copy and paste the link into your browser) and then enter your personal access code to begin the survey.

Survey link:

Personal Access Code:

Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and all of your responses will be kept confidential. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Ethan Igo at [ethan.igo@montana.edu](mailto:ethan.igo@montana.edu) or (406) 994-7463.

As a token of appreciation for helping us, we would like to send you a \$5 Amazon gift code upon successful completion of the survey. We appreciate your time and consideration in completing the survey. It is only with the help of graduates like you that we can obtain the necessary information to guide our program and its graduates to a successful future.

Sincerely,

Ethan A. Igo  
Montana State University-Bozeman  
Division of Agricultural Education  
228 Linfield Hall  
Bozeman, MT 59717  
(406) 994-7463

Dustin K. Perry, Ph.D.  
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(406) 994-3693



**Montana State University  
Division of Agricultural Education  
Request to Participate in Survey Research**



Date: 1/20/2017

Dear ,

Last week we sent you a survey invitation, asking for your help to determine possible reasons MSU Agricultural Education Broadfield Teaching graduates chose to enter, leave or stay in the teaching profession. If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your valuable input!

If you have not had a chance to take the survey yet, we would appreciate you reading the message below and completing the survey.

Your response to this survey is important in providing information to best prepare our future graduates for a successful transition into a career as an agricultural educator. This is a short survey and should take no more than 30 minutes to complete. Please click on the link below to go to the survey website (or copy and paste the link into your browser) and then enter your personal access code to begin the survey.

Survey link: [https://montana.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_4I78rCNRiGUpU17](https://montana.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_4I78rCNRiGUpU17)

Personal Access Code:

Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and all of your responses will be kept confidential. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Ethan Igo at [ethan.igo@montana.edu](mailto:ethan.igo@montana.edu) or (406) 994-7463.

As a token of appreciation for helping us, we would like to send you a \$5 Amazon gift code upon successful completion of the survey. We appreciate your time and consideration in completing the survey. It is only with the help of graduates like you that we can obtain the necessary information to guide our program and its graduates to a successful future.

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**Montana State University  
Division of Agricultural Education  
Request to Participate in Survey Research**



Date: 2/9/2017

Dear,

Spring is a busy time of the year, and we understand how valuable your spare time is. We are hoping that you may be able to give about 15 minutes of your time to help us collect some important information for Montana State University and the Division of Agricultural Education by completing a survey.

If you have already completed the survey, we really appreciate your participation. If you have not yet responded, we would like to urge you to complete the survey. We want to ensure that all MSU Agricultural Education Teaching graduates have a chance to participate and provide information about the decision to enter, leave or stay in the teaching profession.

This is a short survey and should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Please complete the following steps to participate in the survey:

1. Go to <http://ageducation.montana.edu/survey.html>
2. Click the link under the heading "Agricultural Education Broadfield Teaching Graduate Survey."
3. Enter the following access code to begin the survey.

Personal Access Code:

Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and all of your responses will be kept confidential. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Ethan Igo at [ethan.igo@montana.edu](mailto:ethan.igo@montana.edu) or (406) 994-7463.

As a token of appreciation for helping us, we would like to send you a \$5 Amazon gift code upon successful completion of the survey. We appreciate your time and consideration in completing the survey. It is only with the help of graduates like you that we can obtain the necessary information to guide our program and its graduates to a successful future.

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APPENDIX C

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

**Demographics and General Questions**

This section will ask you to answer demographic and general questions. Please answer all of the questions.

1. What is your sex?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  
2. How old are you?
  - a. (Drop down answers range from 21-60)
  
3. What is your ethnicity?
 

a. American Indian or Alaskan Native	d. Hispanic
b. Asian or Pacific Islander	e. White or Caucasian
c. Black or African-American	f. Other (text box)
  
4. Did you receive at least three years of your agricultural education training from Montana State University-Bozeman?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

Question 5 appears only if the respondent answered “No” to question 4.

5. At what other institution did you receive agricultural education training?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Please select all of the degrees you have been awarded:
  - a. Associate’s
  - b. Bachelor’s
  - c. Master’s
  - d. PhD
  
7. What is your current annual income range?
 

a. Less than \$10,000	g. \$60,000 - \$69,999
b. \$10,000 - \$19,999	h. \$70,000 - \$79,999
c. \$20,000 - \$29,999	i. \$80,000 - \$89,999
d. \$30,000 - \$39,999	j. \$90,000 - \$99,999
e. \$40,000 - \$49,999	k. \$100,000 - \$149,999
f. \$50,000 - \$59,999	l. More than \$150,000

8. As of May 2016, how many years of formal teaching (as a licensed educator employed by an school) experience do you have?
  - a. (Answers range from 0-30)
9. What academic year did you first enroll at Montana State University-Bozeman? (1995-2016)
  - a. (Text entry, restricted to entries of 1995-2016)
10. What year did you graduate from Montana State University-Bozeman with a degree in Agricultural Education-Broadfield Teaching?
  - a. (Text entry, restricted to entries of 1995-2016)
11. What was your final cumulative GPA upon graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman?
  - a. Below 2.00
  - b. Between 2.00-2.50
  - c. Between 2.51-3.00
  - d. Between 3.01-3.50
  - e. Above 3.50
12. Which of the following options best describes your career path upon graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman?
  - a. Never entered high school agricultural education teaching profession
  - b. Entered high school agricultural education teaching profession upon graduation, still teaching
  - c. Entered high school agricultural education teaching profession upon graduation, left at later date, did not re-enter
  - d. Did not enter high school agricultural education teaching profession upon graduation, entered at a later date, then left
  - e. Did not enter high school agricultural education teaching profession upon graduation, entered at a later date, still teaching

**Never Entered Teaching Profession Block**

1. Did you intend to become an agricultural education teacher upon graduation from high school?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
2. To what degree do you agree with the statement "My student teaching experience highly influenced my decision to pursue teaching as a career."
  - a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither agree or disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
  
3. Where did you complete your student teaching experience? (School/City/State)
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Did you intend to enter the teaching profession upon graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
5. Did you apply for high school agricultural education teaching positions upon graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
6. What industry are you currently employed in?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. What is your current job title?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  
8. Are you self-employed?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_

9. Using the categories below, please indicate whether each item was a major, moderate, or minor factor in your **decision to not enter the teaching profession.**

	Major	Moderate	Minor	N/A
Competitive salary elsewhere OUTSIDE the field of education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Competitive salary elsewhere WITHIN the field of education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dissatisfied with reassignment or changes in the position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
End of contract/temporary assignment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of advancement in the teaching profession	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruited for another position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduction in force	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unclear opportunities for advancement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrative leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrators actions did not support teaching staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career break	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Culture of school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate mentoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate training to support position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of autonomy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of supportive working environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Raising a family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate training to manage classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of community support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of connection to students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities for competition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relocation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Role as FFA advisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Other than those already identified, were there any other major reason(s) for not entering the profession?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

Question 11 appears only if the respondent answered “Yes” to question 10.

11. Please describe major reason(s) for not entering the profession?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

12. Did you feel you received the requisite training, skills and knowledge from Montana State University needed to be successful as a high school agricultural educator?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

Question 13 appears only if the respondent answered “No” to question 12.

13. What additional training, skills and knowledge do you believe Montana State University-Bozeman could have provided to better prepare you as a high school agricultural educator?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

**Entered Teaching Profession upon Graduation, Then Left**

1. Did you intend to become an agricultural education teacher upon graduation from high school?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
2. To what degree do you agree with the statement "My student teaching experience highly influenced my decision to pursue teaching as a career."
  - a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither agree or disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
  
3. Where did you complete your student teaching experience? (School/City/State)
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Did you intend to enter the teaching profession upon graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman?
  - b. Yes
  - c. No
  
5. When did you first begin teaching high school agricultural education?
  - a. Semester (Drop down)
  - b. Year (Drop down)
  
6. At what school did you last teach high school agricultural education?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. How was your position classified?
  - a. Full-time
  - b. Part-time
  
8. How many unique courses of agricultural education did you teach in the last school year of your last position? (*i.e. three periods of Ag Welding 1 is ONE unique course, but Ag Welding 1, 2 and 3 would be THREE unique courses*)
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  
9. How many years did you anticipate staying when you first started teaching?
  - a. (Text box)
  
10. When did you officially leave the high school agricultural education teaching profession?
  - a. Year (Drop down)

11. What industry are you currently employed in?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

12. What is your current job title?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

13. Are you self-employed?

- a. Yes
- b. No

14. Have you taught high school agricultural education at more than one school since graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman?

- a. Yes
- b. No

15. Please list the schools in which you have taught agricultural education since graduating from Montana State University-Bozeman:

School	Years Taught at School
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)

16. Using the categories below, please indicate whether each item was a major, moderate, or minor factor in your **decision to leave the teaching profession**.

	Major	Moderate	Minor	Non-factor
Competitive salary elsewhere OUTSIDE the field of education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Competitive salary elsewhere WITHIN the field of education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dissatisfied with reassignment or changes in the position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
End of contract/temporary assignment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of advancement in the teaching profession	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruited for another position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduction in force	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unclear opportunities for advancement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrative leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrators actions did not support teaching staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career break	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Culture of school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate mentoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate training to support position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of autonomy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of supportive working environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Raising a family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate training to manage classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of community support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of connection to students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities for competition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relocation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Role as FFA advisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Question 17 appears only if the respondent answered “Major, Moderate, or Minor” to “Relocation” in question 16.

17. Which of the following indicates where you relocated?
- a. Within Montana
  - b. Outside Montana

18. Other than those already identified, were there any other major reason(s) for leaving the profession?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

Question 19 appears only if the respondent answered “Yes” to question 18.

19. Please describe major reason(s) for leaving the profession?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

20. Do you intend to re-enter the high school agricultural education teaching profession in the future?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

21. What are the reasons behind your intent to re-enter the high school agricultural education teaching profession?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

22. Did you feel you received the requisite training, skills and knowledge from Montana State University needed to be successful as a high school agricultural educator?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Question 21 appears only if the respondent answered “No” to question 20.

23. What additional training, skills and knowledge do you believe Montana State University-Bozeman could have provided to better prepare you as a high school agricultural educator?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

**Entered Teaching Profession Upon Graduation, Still Teaching**

1. Did you intend to become an agricultural education teacher upon graduation from high school?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
2. To what degree do you agree with the statement "My student teaching experience highly influenced my decision to pursue teaching as a career."
  - a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither agree or disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
  
3. Where did you complete your student teaching experience? (School/City/State)
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Did you intend to enter the teaching profession upon graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman?
  - b. Yes
  - c. No
  
5. When did you first begin teaching high school agricultural education?
  - d. Semester (Drop down)
  - e. Year (Drop down)
  
6. At what school are you currently teaching?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. How is your position classified?
  - a. Full-time
  - b. Part-time
  
8. How many unique courses of agricultural education did you teach in the last school year of your last position? (*i.e. three periods of Ag Welding 1 is ONE unique course, but Ag Welding 1, 2 and 3 would be THREE unique courses*)
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  
9. How many years did you anticipate staying when you first started teaching?
  - a. (Text box)
  
10. Have you taught high school agricultural education at more than one school since graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Question 11 appears only if the respondent answered “Yes” to question 10.

11. Please list the schools in which you have taught agricultural education since graduating from Montana State University-Bozeman:

School	Years Taught at School
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)

12. Using the categories below, please indicate whether each item was a major, moderate, or minor factor in your **decision to remain in the teaching profession.**

	Major	Moderate	Minor	N/A
Adequate mentoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adequate training to support position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrative leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrators actions support teaching staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Culture of school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal autonomy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Position allowed time to raise a family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supportive working environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clear opportunities for advancement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Competitive salary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Potential for advancement in the teaching profession	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stable contract	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adequate training to manage classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connection to students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities for competition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Role as FFA advisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. Other than those already identified, were there any other major reason(s) for staying in the profession?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Question 14 appears only if the respondent answered “Yes” to question 13.

14. Please describe major reason(s) for staying in the profession?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_

15. Did you feel you received the requisite training, skills and knowledge from Montana State University needed to be successful as a high school agricultural educator?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Question 16 appears only if the respondent answered “No” to question 15.

16. What additional training, skills and knowledge do you believe Montana State University-Bozeman could have provided to better prepare you as a high school agricultural educator?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

**Did Not Enter Teaching Profession, Entered At A Later Date, Still Teaching**

1. Did you intend to become an agricultural education teacher upon graduation from high school?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. To what degree do you agree with the statement “My student teaching experience highly influenced my decision to pursue teaching as a career.”
  - a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither agree or disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
3. Where did you complete your student teaching experience? (School/City/State)
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Did you intend to enter the teaching profession upon graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
5. Did you apply for jobs teaching high school agricultural education upon graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
6. Briefly describe your reasons for entering the agricultural education teaching profession immediately upon graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
7. What, if any, jobs did you enter upon graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman BEFORE entering the teaching profession?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
8. When did you first begin teaching high school agricultural education?
  - a. Semester (Drop down)
  - b. Year (Drop down)
9. How is your position classified?
  - a. Full-time
  - b. Part-time

10. How many unique courses of agricultural education did you teach in the last school year of your last position? (i.e. three periods of Ag Welding 1 is ONE unique course, but Ag Welding 1, 2 and 3 would be THREE unique courses)

a. \_\_\_\_\_

11. How many years did you anticipate staying when you first started teaching?

a. (Text box)

12. Have you taught high school agricultural education at more than one school since graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Question 12 appears only if the respondent answered “Yes” to question 11.

13. Please list the schools in which you have taught agricultural education since graduating from Montana State University-Bozeman:

School	Years Taught at School
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)

14. Using the categories below, please indicate whether each item was a major, moderate, or minor factor in your **decision to remain in the teaching profession**.

	Major	Moderate	Minor	N/A
Adequate mentoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adequate training to support position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrative leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrators actions support teaching staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Culture of school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal autonomy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Position allowed time to raise a family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supportive working environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clear opportunities for advancement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Competitive salary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Potential for advancement in the teaching profession	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stable contract	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adequate training to manage classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connection to students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities for competition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Role as FFA advisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Other than those already identified, were there any other major reason(s) for staying in the profession?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Question 16 appears only if the respondent answered “Yes” to question 15.

16. Please describe major reason(s) for staying in the profession?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_

17. Did you feel you received the requisite training, skills and knowledge from Montana State University needed to be successful as a high school agricultural educator?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

Question 17 appears only if the respondent answered “No” to question 16.

18. What additional training, skills and knowledge do you believe Montana State University-Bozeman could have provided to better prepare you as a high school agricultural educator?
- a. \_\_\_\_\_

**Did Not Enter Teaching Profession, Entered At A Later Date, Then Left**

1. Did you intend to become an agricultural education teacher upon graduation from high school?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
2. To what degree do you agree with the statement "My student teaching experience highly influenced my decision to pursue teaching as a career."
  - a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither agree or disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
  
3. Where did you complete your student teaching experience? (School/City/State)
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Did you intend to enter the teaching profession upon graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
5. Did you apply for jobs teaching high school agricultural education upon graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
6. Briefly describe your reasons for entering the agricultural education teaching profession immediately upon graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. What, if any, jobs did you enter upon graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman BEFORE entering the teaching profession?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  
8. When did you first begin teaching high school agricultural education?
  - a. Semester (Drop down)
  - b. Year (Drop down)
  
9. At what school did you last teach high school agricultural education?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_

10. How was your position classified?

- a. Full-time
- b. Part-time

11. How many unique courses of agricultural education did you teach in the last school year of your last position? (i.e. three periods of Ag Welding 1 is ONE unique course, but Ag Welding 1, 2 and 3 would be THREE unique courses)

- a. \_\_\_\_\_

12. How many years did you anticipate staying when you first started teaching?

- a. (Text box)

13. When did you officially leave the high school agricultural education profession?

- a. (2005-2016)

14. Have you taught high school agricultural education at more than one school since graduation from Montana State University-Bozeman?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Question 15 appears only if the respondent answered “Yes” to question 14.

15. Please list the schools in which you have taught agricultural education since graduating from Montana State University-Bozeman:

School	Years Taught at School
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)
(Text Entry)	(Numerical entry)

16. What industry are you currently employed in?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_

17. What is your current job title?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_

18. Are you self-employed?

- a. Yes
- b. No

19. Using the categories below, please indicate whether each item was a major, moderate, or minor factor in your **decision to leave the teaching profession**.

	Major	Moderate	Minor	Non-factor
Competitive salary elsewhere OUTSIDE the field of education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Competitive salary elsewhere WITHIN the field of education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dissatisfied with reassignment or changes in the position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
End of contract/temporary assignment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of advancement in the teaching profession	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruited for another position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduction in force	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unclear opportunities for advancement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrative leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrators actions did not support teaching staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career break	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Culture of school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate mentoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate training to support position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of autonomy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of supportive working environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Raising a family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate training to manage classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of community support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of connection to students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities for competition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relocation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Role as FFA advisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Question 20 appears only if the respondent answered “Major, Moderate, or Minor” to “Relocation” in question 19.

20. Which of the following indicates where you relocated?
- a. Within Montana
  - b. Outside Montana

21. Other than those already identified, were there any other major reason(s) for leaving the profession?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

Question 22 appears only if the respondent answered “Yes” to question 21.

22. Please describe major reasons(s) for leaving the profession.
- a. \_\_\_\_\_

23. Do you intend to re-enter the high school agricultural education teaching profession in the future?
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_

24. Did you feel you received the requisite training, skills and knowledge from Montana State University needed to be successful as a high school agricultural educator?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

Question 23 appears only if the respondent answered “Yes” to question 22.

25. What additional training, skills and knowledge do you believe Montana State University-Bozeman could have provided to better prepare you as a high school agricultural educator?
- a. \_\_\_\_\_