

## SPECIAL FEATURE - DEBATE THE ISSUES

This issue of *The Journal* contains the beginning of a series of "debate the issues" articles authored by leaders in agricultural teacher education. The first of these Special Features addresses the "pros" and "cons" of combined departments of agricultural and extension education. The authors are Ralph E. Bender, The Ohio State University, and Harold R. Crawford, Iowa State University. It is hoped that these articles will stimulate professional discussion and enrichment. Reactions from readers will be welcomed.

### EXTENSION EDUCATION SHOULD BE A PART OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

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Cooperative Extension in agriculture is primarily a program in agricultural education. Its major purpose is to develop people who are interested or engaged in planning and carrying out programs to produce and market food and fiber. The program also serves people who are interested or involved in 4-H clubs, community development, and services to agriculture for the purpose of improving efficiency and standards of living. Personnel in extension, therefore, must be competent in planning and conducting programs that promote learning. Even though the methods are somewhat different than those used by teachers of vocational agriculture, extension personnel must make good use of basic principles in teaching. It is important for their teaching to be interesting, thought provoking and practical.

The preparation of extension personnel is a responsibility of the Land-Grant universities where agriculture is an integral part of their programs. Such universities have a responsibility for preparing extension workers the same as they have for teachers of vocational agriculture. According to policies of the USDA, the Cooperative Extension program cannot provide formal credit programs at the university as a teaching unit. Therefore, they are called upon to look to departments, divisions or colleges compatible with their purposes and interested in providing instruction as needed. An

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examination of university programs reveals that the functions of agricultural education departments in the preparation of teachers of vocational agriculture is most similar to what needs to be done in extension preparation and, therefore, the departments should be given a responsibility for extension. In 1955 at The Ohio State University, a University committee made a study of various programs to identify the most logical place for extension training. The committee found that the Department of Agricultural Education best met such a function. Since that time extension pre-service and in-service programs have been an integral part of the Department of Agricultural Education.

Successful programs of vocational agriculture and extension necessitate a cooperative relationship. There must be a good working relationship between these agencies in meeting the needs of youth and adults engaged in agriculture. Generally, where both of these programs are found, it is evident that their clientele are not entirely separate. Adults participating in vocational agriculture are likely to be among the best participants in the Cooperative Extension Service and vice versa. Teachers of vocational agriculture and extension agents are commonly involved in regularly scheduled meetings throughout the year in planning and conducting programs. Many FFA members have been 4-H club members with some continuation in both programs. Junior fairs are integrated to a great extent in some states, particularly where the exhibit and sale of livestock are involved. This results in more attractive programs in terms of facilities, premiums, and quality. There is no good reason for each agency not receiving appropriate recognition for such activity. Through cooperative and coordinated programs it is much more likely that duplication of educational programs and services will be eliminated. If the professional personnel involved in vocational agriculture, extension and other publicly financed programs do not eliminate unnecessary duplication, the taxpayers who are becoming more sensitive to increased tax needs will see that it is done.

If vocational agriculture and extension programs are coordinated and a cooperative relationship exists, the personnel involved need to have mutual respect and understanding of both programs. This does not just happen--it must be planned. By studying and working together in a pre-service and in-service program in a department of agricultural education, such a condition is much more likely to be attained. Jealousies and misunderstandings are a result of not knowing and appreciating the purposes, procedures, and personnel of related programs.

It is evident in an agricultural education program for both extension personnel and vocational teachers that additional courses need to be provided; however, some courses should be offered to serve both groups. For example, in agricultural

education at Ohio State University, there is an advanced undergraduate and graduate course on *Youth Organizations*. The description is "Analysis of youth organizations in vocational and extension education with emphasis on planning and conducting such programs." When this course is taught primarily for teachers, the emphasis is on FFA with some applications to the 4-H club if some extension agents are enrolled. When taught by a professor in extension education, the emphasis would be on the 4-H club. Another course at the graduate level for both groups is *Program Planning and Development*. The description is "Principles, theory and practice in developing state and local programs of vocational, technical and extension education." A different type of course organization is illustrated by *Experience in Agricultural Education*. This course includes specified sections for vocational agriculture, cooperative extension, other agricultural education programs and agricultural occupations. In addition to courses organized to serve both groups, there are specific courses for extension and others specifically for vocational agriculture such as *Methods in Teaching Vocational Agriculture* and *Program Development in Cooperative Extension*.

Many of the state extension staff personnel are located at the Land-Grant institution. They provide an excellent source for many good prospects as faculty members in the department of agricultural education. They can be appointed on a part-time basis in the department while still pursuing their major function in the Cooperative Extension Service. For example, at The Ohio State University there are extension persons on part-time appointments of 15 to 40 percent in agricultural education. These persons, all of whom have Ph.D. degrees, include an Assistant Director for Staff Development and Program Analysis; Assistant Director, 4-H; Assistant State Leader, 4-H; Leader, Professional Improvement; and Leader, Studies and Evaluation of the Cooperative Extension Service. The advantage of having these people teaching the extension courses and advising students who are interested in extension both at the undergraduate and graduate levels is that they are leaders in extension. All but one have been trained as teachers of vocational agriculture.

Students interested in agricultural education are like many students at a university. They want to complete a college degree program that prepares them for more than a single option. Students prepared in both extension and vocational agriculture have more options available in completing their training programs and more possibilities for employment when they secure their degree.

One of the best reasons for recommending that extension education be a part of the department of agricultural education is that it is working well where it is now being practiced.

Such a program improves both the preparation of teachers of vocational agriculture and the preparation for extension workers. The writer believes that agricultural education departments in colleges of agriculture provide a better climate for combined programs than where agricultural education is provided in a college of education or some area other than agriculture.

Deans of colleges of agriculture want agricultural education departments to broaden their programs beyond preparing teachers of agriculture. In 1967 a committee on agricultural education was co-chaired by Dr. Roy M. Kottman, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Home Economics at The Ohio State University, and Dr. Darrel S. Metcalfe, Dean of the College of Agriculture at the University of Arizona as a part of the Commission on Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources sponsored by the National Science Foundation to prepare a statement concerning agricultural education for the seventies and beyond. In the report it was pointed out:

The responsibilities of staff members in agricultural education will extend to encompass some functions not now regularly carried out. They will establish contact with a wide clientele. Regardless of the form that teacher education programs take, the underlying purpose is to develop understanding and an ability to design, implement, and evaluate educational programs.

The committee indicated that teacher educators need to design curricula for preparing personnel in addition to teachers of vocational agriculture, including post-high school teachers; cooperative extension personnel; agricultural educators who will be entering international education programs; agricultural educators to work in agricultural business including sales, promotion, and public relations; elementary and secondary teachers of general agriculture; teachers to conduct adult education programs; and teachers who have the specialized knowledge and skills needed to work with disadvantaged students. In the judgment of the writer, departments of agricultural education should be broadening the scope of their programs to better meet the needs in agricultural education. This will make the program more effective in preparing teachers of vocational agriculture and add to the total interest and effectiveness of the department.

#### *Reference*

Commission on Education and Natural Resources, "Agricultural Education for the Seventies and Beyond." Washington, D. C.: American Vocational Association, July, 1971.