

# CAREER PROGRESSION PATTERNS OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAJORS AT NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

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This study reports the career progressions of agricultural education majors at North Carolina State University between 1963 and 1977. One purpose of the study was to identify and track graduates in three major career patterns--those teaching vocational agriculture upon graduation, those teaching but leaving the profession during the 15-year period, and those who never taught vocational agriculture. Another purpose of the study was to identify the entry-level occupations of those who did not teach vocational agriculture.

## *Procedure*

The method of determining entry-level occupations involved keeping records on each graduating class, a check of the Vocational Agriculture Teacher Directory in the State, and checks with colleagues and students about the employment of graduates. In unknown cases, parents were written or called to obtain this information. Information on whether or not graduates entered the vocational agriculture teaching profession was determined for all 338 students who graduated between 1963 and 1977.

In addition to the methods used above, two follow-up surveys of all graduates were designed to determine the entry-level occupations of those not entering vocational agriculture teaching positions. However, the entry-level occupations of 27 graduates were unknown and the occupations of 22 graduates who left teaching remained unknown.

Findings were reported on an annual basis and then grouped into three five-year periods. The analysis centered on the following topics: (1) attractiveness to graduates of teaching vocational agriculture, (2) holding power of the vocational agriculture teaching profession, and (3) occupations attracting teachers from teaching.

## *Attractiveness of Teaching Vocational Agriculture*

Most teacher educators have a feel for the percent of graduates who enter vocational agriculture teaching positions following graduation. For many years North Carolina teacher educators have been saying 60 percent enter teaching without knowing how many. Records in this regard since 1963 are summarized in Table 1.

Data in Table 1 were presented in three five-year time periods. For the ten-year period between 1963 and 1972, slightly more than 60 percent of the graduates entered teaching positions in vocational agriculture. However, between 1973 and 1977, the percentage entering teaching positions declined to 49.5 percent. The overall percentage entering teaching positions between 1963 and 1977 was 57.7 percent.

Table 1  
OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF GRADUATES OF AGRICULTURAL  
EDUCATION FROM 1963 THROUGH 1977

Occupational Status	Number and Percent by Year						Totals	
	1963-1967		1968-1972		1973-1977		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Taught Vocational Agriculture following graduation	63	61.26	76	61.26	51	49.52	195	57.69
Did not Teach Vocational Agriculture following graduation	43	38.74	48	38.74	52	50.48	143	42.31
<b>Totals</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Holding Power of Teaching Vocational Agriculture as an Occupation*

While the number and percent of graduates entering vocational agriculture teaching positions is important, there is also the question of how many of those who enter teaching remain over time.

In North Carolina, 106 of the 195 teachers (54.36%) who entered teaching after graduation between 1963 and 1977 had left teaching. These results are summarized in Table 2.

One additional point available from information in Table 1 and 2 was that 26.33 percent of the 338 graduates between 1963 and 1977 were teaching vocational agriculture in February, 1978.

A year to year summary of the number and percent of graduates who are teaching now, have left teaching, and who never taught follows in Table 3.

Table 2

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION  
GRADUATES REMAINING IN AND LEAVING TEACHING

Year	Now Teaching		Left Teaching		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1963-67	20	29.41	48	70.59	68	100.0
1968-72	34	44.74	42	55.26	76	100.0
1973-77	35	68.63	16	31.37	51	100.0
Totals*	89	45.64	106	54.36	195	100.0

\*Totals for 15-year period.

Table 3

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF GRADUATES NOW TEACHING, WHO LEFT TEACHING  
OR WHO NEVER TAUGHT VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE

Year	Now Teaching		Taught But Left		Never Taught		TOTALS	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1963	2	8.7	11	47.8	10	43.5	23	100
1964	2	7.1	16	57.1	10	35.2	28	100
1965	5	14.3	10	28.6	20	57.1	35	100
1966	7	38.9	8	44.4	3	16.7	18	100
1967	3	42.9	4	57.1	0	0.0	7	100
1968	6	37.5	10	62.5	0	0.0	16	100
1969	5	29.4	6	35.3	6	35.3	17	100
1970	11	29.7	9	24.3	17	46.0	37	100
1971	8	27.6	9	31.0	12	41.4	29	100
1972	8	33.3	6	25.0	10	41.7	24	100
1973	7	30.4	5	21.7	11	47.8	23	100
1974	9	40.9	7	31.8	5	27.3	21	100
1975	6	28.6	5	23.8	10	47.6	21	100
1976	8	53.3	1	6.7	6	40.0	15	100
1977	7	32.0	0	0.0	17	68.0	24	100
Totals:**	94*	27.8	107	31.7	137	40.5	338	100

\*Includes five who entered teaching following a different occupation.

\*\*Totals for 15-year period.

A reading of Table 3 should take into account that from one month to 15 years had elapsed since graduation. Thus, the results shown for 1963 means that 15 years passed since the students graduated; for 1977 one month had passed.

During 1967 and 1968, all graduates entered teaching vocational agriculture following graduation. These were the only years where all graduates chose to teach upon graduation. Also, 1977 was the low year in terms of graduates entering teaching. Ten students graduated in December, 1977, and this summary was made in February, 1978, which may explain in part the low percentage entering teaching positions.

### *Occupations Attracting Vocational Agriculture Teachers*

In Table 3 it was shown that 31.7 percent of all graduates who entered the vocational agriculture teaching profession following graduation left teaching at some point in time. Of interest to Agricultural Education leaders should be the question of what occupations teachers enter when they leave positions. This information is summarized in Table 4 and reported in three five-year blocks of time.

Table 4

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF GRADUATES WHO LEFT TEACHING  
BY OCCUPATION ENTERED

Occupation Entered	1963-67		1968-72		1973-77		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Education-Related	18	39.13	6	14.28	1	6.25	25	24.04
Farming	2	4.35	6	14.28	6	37.50	14	13.46
Agribusiness	9	19.56	3	7.15	2	12.50	14	13.46
Non-Education	4	8.70	4	9.52	0	0.0	8	7.69
Military	4	8.70	1	2.38	0	0.0	5	4.81
Extension	2	4.35	3	7.15	2	12.50	7	6.73
FmHA	4	8.70	1	2.38	1	6.25	6	5.77
ASCS	1	2.16	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	.96
SCS	2	4.35	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	1.93
Unknown	0	0.0	18	42.86	4	25.0	22	21.15
Totals	46	100.00	42	100.00	16	100.00	104	100.00

In Table 4 some interesting occupational patterns are visible. For example, these data indicate that farming was the only occupation demonstrating an increase in percentage from 1963 to the present. This occupation changed from a low of 4.35 percent

between 1963-67, to 14.28 percent between 1968-72, and 37.5 percent between 1973-77. From 1963 to the present, there was a decrease in the percent of teachers moving to education-related occupations, the military, non-education or agriculture-related occupations, and to some extent, agribusiness occupations.

Admittedly, unknown information for the period 1968-72 could influence the outcomes for that period.

### *Entry Occupations of Agricultural Education Graduates*

Entry occupations for all graduates between 1963 and 1977 are summarized in Table 5.

Equally important to the vocational agriculture teacher supply and demand situation is the number of graduates who do not enter teaching positions following graduation, but later return to teaching.

Since 1963, five of the 143 graduates who did not enter teaching following graduation entered teaching later. This number represents 3.50 percent of those previously choosing non-teaching occupations.

Table 5

#### ENTRY OCCUPATIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION GRADUATES FROM 1963 TO 1977

Entry Occupation	1963-67		1968-72		1973-78		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Teaching vo-ag	68	61.26	76	61.29	51	49.51	195	57.69
Extension	8	7.27	8	6.45	5	4.85	21	6.20
Agribusiness	8	7.27	8	6.45	3	2.91	19	5.62
Farming	0	0.00	6	4.84	10	9.71	16	4.73
FmHA	10	9.01	4	3.23	1	0.97	15	4.44
Non-Ag/Education	2	1.80	4	3.23	6	5.84	12	3.55
Teaching Non-Vo-Ag	2	1.80	4	3.23	3	2.91	9	2.67
Military	2	1.80	5	4.03	1	0.97	8	2.37
Soil Conservation	3	2.70	1	0.80	2	1.95	6	1.77
Federal Land Bank	0	0.00	2	1.61	1	0.97	3	0.89
Farm Organization	1	0.90	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.29
Unknown	4	3.60	6	4.84	17	16.50	27	7.99
Totals	111	100.00	124	100.00	103	100.00	338	100.00

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