

EVALUATION OF A WORKSHOP ON
YOUNG FARMER PROGRAMS *

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Have you considered the advantages of offering a young farmer program to the farmers in your area if you are located in an area which will justify such a program? As part of an in-service program, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in conjunction with the Illinois Young Farmer Advisory Council, sponsored a workshop on young farmer programs in 1976. The workshop attracted 30 teachers from different parts of the State of Illinois.

The main objectives of the workshop were:

1. To impress upon teachers the importance of organizing a young farmer program in their communities,
2. To provide agricultural occupations teachers with information that would enable them to plan and implement young farmer programs, and
3. To identify materials and resource personnel to assist teachers in organizing their programs.

Planning the Workshop

The responsibility for planning the young farmer workshop was assigned to the following groups: Occupational Consultants from the Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education in the Illinois Office of Education; Teacher Educators from the State Universities in Illinois; the Executive Secretary of the Illinois Future Farmers of America; the Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers; and officers in the Illinois Young Farmer Association.

The workshop committee worked cooperatively to make final plans and identify relevant resource persons and materials. Also, the Agricultural Education staff at the University of Illinois held several additional planning meetings. The workshop was designed to actively involve teachers who were currently

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conducting young farmer programs as workshop instructors and to engage participants in a thorough discussion of the procedures for organizing a young farmer program.

Conducting the Workshop

The workshop began on Friday evening, November 19, 1976, with a banquet. The keynote address for the workshop delivered at the banquet was made by the Chairman of the Illinois Young Farmer Advisory Council. The theme of the presentation was "the importance of young farmer programs."

On Saturday morning, a slide presentation was shown to the group which focused on nation-wide young farmer programs. Following this presentation, a panel discussion was held by teachers who currently conduct young farmer programs. After the discussion the panel moderator posed the following questions to the members:

1. How do you identify young farmers and assess their needs?
2. How do you organize a young farmer program?
3. How do you select appropriate programs?
4. How do you keep a young farmer program going, once organized?
5. How do you finance chapter activities?

This discussion generated a series of questions from the workshop participants on all phases of young farmer programs.

Evaluating the Workshop

At the conclusion of the young farmer workshop, each participant responded to an evaluation form. Participants were asked whether or not they would recommend that other agricultural occupations teachers attend a similar type workshop next year. All of the teachers attending indicated that they would highly recommend the workshop to other teachers who were not in attendance.

Next, the teachers were asked to evaluate each presentation as well as each session. The findings are reported in Table I. Generally, a majority of the teachers felt that the amount of time devoted to the presentation and sessions was "about right." Many respondents indicated that a little more time should have been devoted to each presentation.

Table I

TEACHER EVALUATION OF TIME ALLOCATION FOR WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

Activities	Suggested Time (in percent)		
	More	Less	About Right
Speaker on Friday Evening . . .	6.6	6.6	80.0
Panel Discussion on Friday Evening	20.0		77.0
Slide Presentation and Discussion	40.0		60.0
Identifying Young Farmers and Assessing Needs	23.0	10.0	67.0
Organizing a Young Farmer Program	20.0	6.7	73.3
Keeping the Program Going Once Organized	23.3	3.3	73.3

The teachers were also asked to rate the entire workshop. Their responses are presented in Table II.

Table II

OVERALL PARTICIPANT EVALUATION OF THE WORKSHOP

Rating	Percent Responding
Excellent	37.0
Very Good	53.0
Good	10.0
Fair	0.0
Poor	0.0
Total	100.0