AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SELECTED ASPECTS OF SUPERVISED AGRICULTURE EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS AND STUDENT BENEFITS DERIVED FROM THOSE PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL OKLAHOMA

By

JAMES EDWARD RAMSEY

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Thesis Approved:

James D. White
Thesis Adviser

Robert Terry

James P. Key

Norman N. Durham
Dean of the Graduate College

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

At the National FFA Convention in 1988 the voting body decided to change the title Supervised Occupational Experience (SOE) to Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). Throughout this study they are synonymous.

Supervised agricultural experiences (SAE) have been an integral part of any agricultural education student's plan for success. Being a major component of agricultural education the SAE was mandated by the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917. It stated "schools shall provide for directed or supervised practice in agriculture, either on a farm provided for by the school or other farm, for at least six months per year. (P.L. 347, 1917, p. 1). Each student SAE program is planned from input by the agricultural education instructor, student and parents. Setting goals that relate to the student's long-term objectives will benefit his or her career objective. The agricultural education instructor plays an important role in the progress of the student SAE in that through supervision and advanced farm practices the individual grows. The skills and aptitude developed from any SAE activity help students with daily and future decisions that will affect his/her entire life.

The categories of SAE's are growing daily and with the infusion of urban students, the need for creativity and utilization of available resources is very important.

The state of the economy and the reduced number of actual farm students makes the actual production phase of agriculture out of reach to most agricultural education students. Using school facilities and local businesses, students can become aware of the wide range of SAE's available. Through classroom instruction, field trips and personal experience students become productive components of the agriculture industry.

Statement of the Problem

In Central Oklahoma there are a wide range of supervised agricultural experiences. The need for documentation of supervised experience programs is an ever increasing necessity. The need for year-round supervision is a valid and essential practice. Due to increased pressure on state funding, the justification for agricultural education instructors extended contracts is constantly being scrutinized. The need for better application of SAE has become more important since the need for the public education dollars has increased.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to determine agricultural education teachers' perceptions of selected aspects of supervised agricultural experience programs and student benefits derived from those programs in Central Oklahoma.

Objectives of the Study

In order to accomplish the purpose of this study, the following objectives were established:

1. To identify selected demographic characteristics of agricultural education teachers and departments in Central Oklahoma.
2. To identify selected characteristics (strengths and weaknesses) about students' SAE programs as perceived by their instructors in the Central District.
3. To determine by rank perceived value of selected benefits derived from SAE programs by students as perceived by their instructors.

Scope of the Study

This study involved teachers employed during the 1988-89 academic year as agricultural instructors in the 70 agricultural education departments of the Central District. Addresses were determined by documentation of employees through the State Department of Vocational-Technical Education.

Definition of Terms

Supervised agricultural experience (SAE) -- planned practical activities conducted outside of regularly scheduled class time whereby students further develop and apply knowledge, skills and attitudes learned in the vocational agriculture instructional program.

Smith-Hughes Act - 1917 -- legislation that provided for a continued funding for vocational education in agriculture, trade and industrial and homemaking education.

Agricultural education -- refers to secondary school programs that offer courses designed to develop student aptitudes for careers in production agriculture and other agriculture related fields.

Agricultural education instructor -- state certified personnel employed by local school districts to direct programs designed to meet the needs of students desiring occupations in agriculture and to assist in helping adults of the community in meeting their needs in the areas of agriculture.

Agriculture industry -- those occupations and businesses related to all facets of agriculture.

Central District -- the agricultural education supervisory district whose geographical location lies between the Noble county line on the north and Red River on the south, while the east and west boundaries are typically those counties

bisected by Interstate 35 on the west and U.S. Highway 177 on the east.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The quality of a supervised agricultural experience program has a very high correlation to the quality of a total agricultural education program. The agricultural education program is divided into three parts: the classroom, FFA, and SAE. The supervised agricultural experience is an integral part of any successful agricultural education program. This review of literature was divided into five sections and a summary for the purposes of organization and clarity. The major areas of the review consisted of: 1) What is an SAE Program, 2) Importance of SAE Programs, 3) Benefits of SAE Programs, 4) Objectives of SAE Programs, 5) Teacher Involvement in SAE Programs.

What is an SAE Program?

The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 was the foundation of the supervised agricultural experience program. It stated: "schools shall provide for directed or supervised practice in agriculture, either on a farm provided for by the school or other farm, for at least six months per year." (13).

SAE programs are what set vocational agriculture apart from other school courses. Through these experiences the students utilize the skills learned in real life situations.

Since its conception, the SAE program has taken many shapes and sizes. Because of our changing world the SAE had to change and adapt to better serve the students of agricultural education according to Cockrum (2).

"The strength of education through SOE programs was a prominent factor in every students career goals." It is vital that the supervised occupational experience program continue to change from a production-oriented concept to one which will meet the needs of these students in the areas of Agribusiness as it becomes more important within vocational agriculture and agriculture as a whole.

McClain (5) states the concept of SOE programs is based on the traditional thinking that students need hands-on, supervised experiences that are relevant to their occupational objectives. The need for this type of learning can be best explained by the Chinese proverb:

I hear - I forget

I see - and I remember

I do - and I understand

There are two major types of SAE programs: ownership and placement. Ownership SAE programs - the student has total or partial ownership of the materials and other aspects of an enterprise. Regarding Cheek and Beeman's (1) study:

> Placement SAE programs - students are placed in job situations to gain experience. In both programs emphasis is on learning new skills and knowledge and applying skills and knowledge that have been learned in the instructional program (p. 7).

Kaczor (3) defines a good SOE program:

1. Enhances classroom instruction.
2. Provides students with a wide variety of experiences.
3. Serves as a guidance function for students in an exploratory phase.
4. Allows easier transition from school to work.
5. Develops desirable habits, responsibilities, understanding ideals and abilities within real-life situations.
6. Contributes to a desirable relationship among home, school and community. (p. 9)

Rawls (9) stated that supervised occupational experience programs were developed to work with classroom and FFA activities, to develop skills, concepts and values needed in the agriculture industry (p. 31).

Importance of SAE Programs

The supervised agricultural experience program is an integral part of any successful vocational agriculture program.

Schneider (11) in his study, stated that SOE programs will continue to play an increasingly significant role in the education of the young men and women for the agriculture industry.

Slocombe (12) stated, "SOE was an important part of a viable vocational agriculture program, especially during times of rapid change" (p. 23). Vocational agriculture

instructors must use the resources in his/her community with imagination and innovativeness in planning SAE programs to meet the needs of students.

Pals (7) conducted a study to determine the value of SOE programs as perceived by students in Idaho. His findings compared two groups 1981-85 students and 1986 students on selected characteristics. 1981-85 students indicated their major type of SOE was 50.8% farming and 24.6% did farm work. 1986 students indicated 39.6% farming and 36% farm work. In his findings Pals (7) indicated fewer production SOE programs and more on-farm work experiences were being conducted by students. This data was explained by the economic slump in Agriculture and more urban students in vocational agriculture.

Benefits of SAE Programs

Pals (7) study also ranked benefit statements by both groups. The five greatest benefits received from SAE programs by the two groups of students were:

> (a) opportunity to learn on own; (b) promote acceptance of responsibility; (c) develop independence; (d) pride in ownership; and, (e) learn to appreciate work. The benefits of the students were development of behavioral attitudes, values and human relation skills (p. 38).

Kaczor (3) stated, "SOE programs should help students in making decisions on agricultural occupation, whether on or off the farm" (p. 10). SOE programs should be conducted for learning, not earning.

The skills and attitudes achieved in an SAE program well outweigh any monetary gain made by a small scale enterprise at any secondary school student. These aptitudes are what will be the student qualities an employer will examine when interviewing for any occupation career.

A study by Rawls (9) analyzed benefits derived from SOE programs by students as perceived by parents. The findings showed parents of vocational agriculture students recognized the educational and occupational benefits derived from SOE programs and will support educational programs that provide these benefits.

Objectives of SAE Programs

Virdue (14) listed the following objectives for successful SAE programs:

1. To provide an opportunity for students to develop specific occupational skills in agriculture.
2. To provide an opportunity for students to develop abilities and skills necessary to successfully compete for gainful employment.
3. To provide an opportunity for students to develop a sense of personal worth as well as leadership, citizenship and to improve their decision-making skills.
4. To provide an opportunity for students to develop basic and correct concepts.
5. To provide an opportunity for students to develop proficiency in recordkeeping skills.
6. To provide an opportunity for students to experience on-the-job training in placement and ownership.
7. To provide an opportunity for students who have limited farm or no farm facilities to develop skills in non-farm agriculture.
8. To provide an opportunity for students to develop responsibility and self-confidence to manage or own an agribusiness.

9. To provide an opportunity for students to earn and manage money.
10. To provide an opportunity for students to receive on-the-job training in agribusiness in order to enter the world of work.
11. To provide an opportunity for students to develop skills in the organization of business, principles of management, and legal aspects of business.
12. To provide an opportunity for students, parents, teachers and employees to cooperatively set supervised occupational experience programs. (p. 11-12)

These are just some of the many objectives of a well rounded SAE program.

Teacher Involvement in SAE Programs

According to Reakes and Welton (10),

> vocational agriculture teachers assume many roles to have a successful SAE program. Most importantly he/she must be a teacher and be knowledgeable in his/her field. The next role the teacher has is coordinator of activities concerning the SAE program. Other roles a teacher has are crusader, planner, catalyst and public relations expert (p. 227, 231).

Osborne and Reed (6) stated, "a teachers role was composed of five parts: planner, facilitator, supporter, evaluator and diagnostician" (p. 18).

When a vocational agriculture teacher utilizes all five roles in a SAE program everyone involved benefits.

Summary

Through SAE programs young people gain the knowledge and skills necessary to be competitive in many agricultural related occupations. The student gets to utilize the

classroom activities in real-life situations where they can apply these skills.

The major types of SAE programs were ownership and placement. It is up to the teacher to analyze the student's situation and his/her interest. With this information the agricultural education teacher, parents and students themselves can plan the students SAE program. With the influx of more and more urban students, teachers must be more innovative to create new types of SAE programs that meet the needs of the student.

Benefits students receive from SAE programs are many. These benefits are important in the development of the student in that they include attitudes, values, work habits and human relation skills. It appears there is more emphasis toward the learning aspect of SAE programs rather than the earning aspect.

The objectives and goals of SAE programs are to provide students opportunities to develop into productive and intelligent citizens with the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve their occupational goal.

Teacher involvement is most important for any SAE program to be successful. The teacher has to assume a leadership role to accomplish this. Utilizing input from the student, parents, school officials, employers and community the teacher has the major impact regarding the outcome of student SAE programs. Pride must be instilled in students by the teacher for consistent progress to occur.

Because of our changing society there is a need for teachers' to assume more versatile roles. Successful SAE programs are indicative of a combination of success factors which includes interested students, dynamic teachers, concerned parents, and supportive administrators and communities.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the methods and procedures utilized in conducting this study.

The intent of this study was to determine agricultural education teachers perceptions of selected aspects about supervised agricultural experience programs and student benefits derived from those programs in Central Oklahoma. In order to accomplish the purpose and objectives of this study, it was necessary to determine a population and develop an instrument for data collection. A procedure for collecting the data was established and methods utilized to analyze the data were selected. The data treated in this study was collected by mail questionnaire during the late Spring and early Summer of 1989.

The Population

The population of this study involved those agricultural education instructors employed in the 70 agriculture education departments in the Central District (see Figure 1). Potential participants were determined by

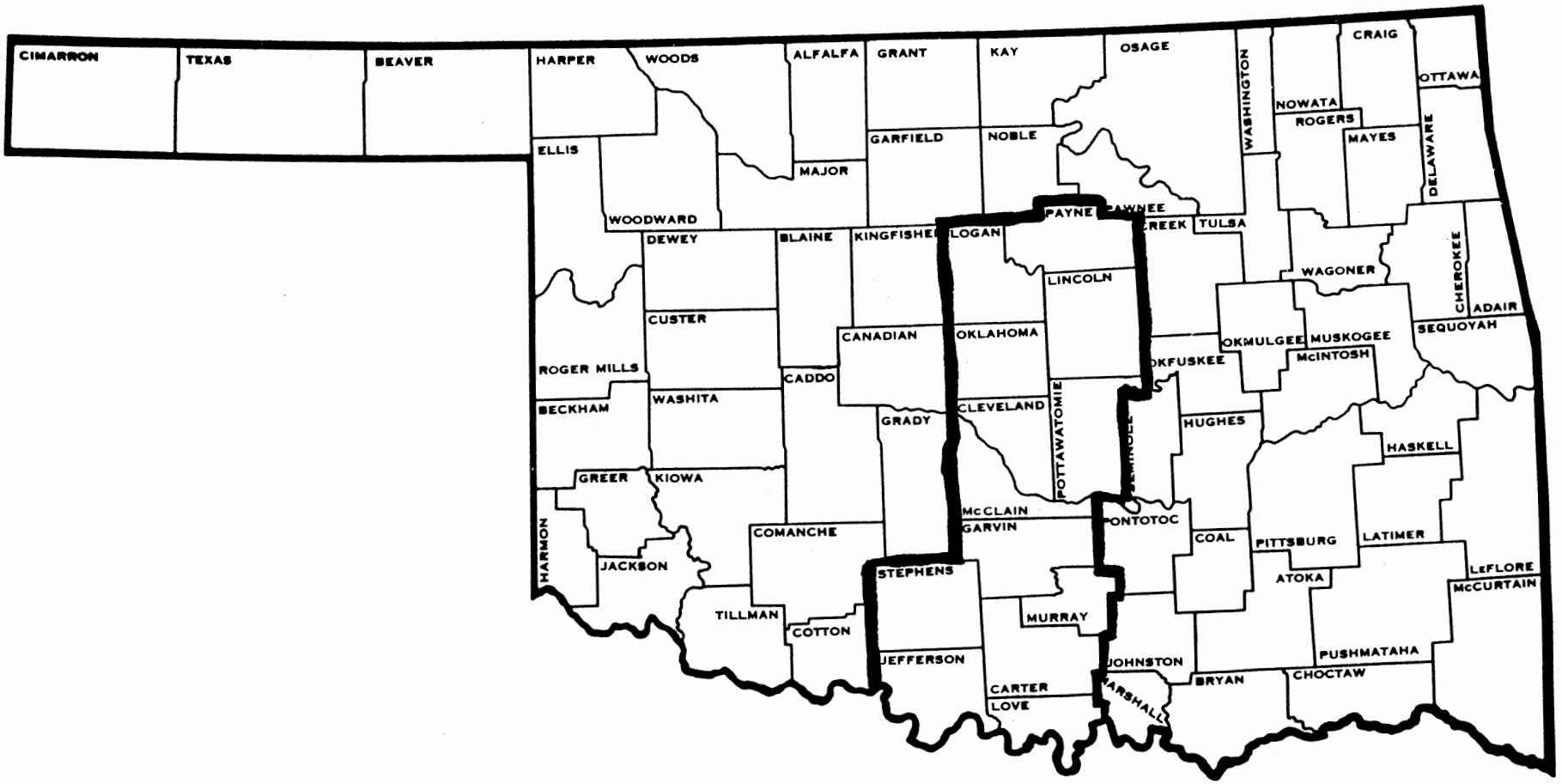

Figure 1. Geographic Location of Oklahoma Central District

documentation of employment through the State Department of Vocational-Technical Education for the 1988-89 academic year.

Development of the Instrument

A questionnaire was developed that would achieve the objectives stated in chapter I (see Appendix A). It was a modified instrument similar to one utilized by Pals (7) in 1987. Part I of the instrument was a general information section to collect demographic data regarding the study participants, program size, and community characteristics. Section II also contained questions ascertaining short answer response regarding the participants perceptions of supervised agricultural experience programs. The purpose of Part II of this summary was to compile data as to the participants perceived description and importance of SAE programs. Part III participants were given a list of 30 benefit statements that they ranked on an interval scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating no benefit and 5 indicating much benefit.

After the questionnaire was developed, it was examined by members of the agricultural education research design class, members of the graduate committee and district supervisors also provided input and suggestions as to the strengths and weaknesses of the survey instrument. Their input and comments were utilized to improve and strengthen the instrument.

Administering the Instrument

The questionnaire was mailed to all participants of the agricultural education departments in the Central district April 21, 1989 (see Appendix B). A follow-up mailing conducted in early June (see Appendix C) and telephone calls were made to those who didn't respond ten days after the follow-up mailing. Little notable difference was determined between the respondents and the non-respondents contacted in the follow-up telephone calls.

Analysis of Data

The information collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Key (4) stated:

> The primary use of descriptive statistics was to describe information or data through the use of numbers. The characteristics of groups of numbers representing information or data were called descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to describe groups of numerical data such as test scores, number or hours of instruction, or the number of students enrolled in a particular course.

Furthermore, Popham (8), in his advocacy of descriptive statistics stated that "by employing statistical descriptions of a distributions central tendency and variability, an accurate representation of the data under consideration can usually be conveyed" (p. 11). Since this was a descriptive study of SAE programs, the data were also described by employing frequency distributions, percentages and rank-orders.

With regard to the quantitative evaluation of the data collected the selected responses on the interval scales were assigned the following numerical values concerning the perceived importance of the value of SAE, which consisted of: "essential" = 4; "very important" = 3; "important" = 2; "some importance" = 1; and, "no importance" = 0; while the values numerically describing derived SAE benefits included: "great benefit" = 5; "above average" = 4; "average" = 3; "some benefit" = 2; and "little or no benefit" = 1.

In addition, real limits were established to more accurately define and describe the responses secured by the survey instrument. The limits set for the importance and value of SAE were 3.5 and above for "essential", 2.5 to 3.49 for "very important", 1.5 to 2.49 for "important", .5 to 1.49 for "some importance", and 0 to .49 for "no importance." Real limits also determined for derived SAE benefits were 4.5 and above for "great benefit", 3.5 to 4.49 for "above average", 2.5 to 2.49 for "average", 1.5 to 2.49 for "some benefit", and 1.49 or less for "little or no benefit."

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The major intent of this study was to determine agricultural education teachers' perceptions of selected aspects about supervised agriculture experience programs and student benefits derived from those programs in Central Oklahoma.

The scope of the study was initiated to include a representative from all 70 agricultural education departments located in the Central district. Survey instruments were sent to 70 agricultural education instructors in the supervisory district, of those 49 (70.0 percent) returned usable questionnaires.

To better understand this study, the primary goal in this chapter was to examine the data collected and report the findings in a logical order according to the format and sequence of the study objectives and questionnaire. Part I of the survey was to review the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their local programs.

Table I revealed the years of teaching experience of the teachers surveyed. Years of experience ranged from eleven teachers with less than five years to one teacher with thirty three years. The six to ten years experience group was the largest with 32.6 percent of the respondents.

The thirty plus years group had the smallest percentage with 2.0 percent. The average number of years experience was 11.63 years.

TABLE I

A DISTRIBUTION OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS
BY YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Years of Experience	Frequency n	Percentage %
1- 5	11	22.45
6-10	16	32.65
11-15	8	16.33
16-20	6	12.24
21-25	7	14.29
26-30	0	0
30+	1	2.04
Totals	49	100

$\bar{X} = 11.63$

Table II showed the agricultural education enrollment of the programs surveyed. The smallest enrollment reported was 31 students, while the largest enrollment was 159. The average enrollment reported among the 49 respondents was 56 students. The largest number of schools with programs fell in the 30-40 student range with 28.5 percent. There were no programs in the 91-100 student category. However, eight programs reported 100 plus students in their programs which consisted of 16.33 percent of the respondents programs.

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION OF PROGRAMS BY LEVELS OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Number of Students	Frequency n	Percentage %
30-40	14	28.75
41-50	5	10.20
51-60	8	16.33
61-70	8	16.33
71-80	4	8.16
81-90	2	4.08
91-100	0	0
100+	8	16.33
Totals	49	100

Community size discussed in Table III revealed that only one program was labeled as a metropolitan area making up 2.04 percent of the total programs responding. The largest number of programs were in communities which were evenly divided as rural/urban on a rural-urban continuum. The 15 programs made up 30.0 percent of the total reported. Over 77 percent of the respondents reported that their programs had a strong rural influence.

TABLE III

A DISTRIBUTION OF CENTRAL DISTRICT COMMUNITIES BY RURAL/URBAN CONTINUUM AS RESPONDED BY RESPONDENTS

Rural/Urban Continuum	Frequency n	Percentage %
Almost Completely Rural	1[illegible]	22.45
Mostly Rural, But Some Urban		24.49
About Evenly Divided; Rural/Urban	15	30.61
Almost Completely Urban	10	20.41
Metropolitan	1	2.04
Totals	49	100

Types of SAE (Supervised Agriculture Experience) programs reported in Table IV were divided into ownership and placement. The ownership type of SAE had the highest percentage of student involvement with 62.1 percent conducting production agriculture programs. The smallest percentage of students were involved in non-traditional ownership, with 12.9 percent. Placement type SAE programs showed the highest percentage of students were involved in off-farm placement with 39.7 percent and the smallest percentage of students were involved in non-traditional placement programs (24.0 percent).

TABLE IV

A DISTRIBUTION OF SUPERVISED EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS AMONG STUDENTS BY TYPE OF SAE

Type	Frequency n	Percentage %
Ownership:		
Agribusiness	524	25.0
Production Agriculture	1300	62.1
Non-Traditional	270	12.9
Totals	2094	100
Placement:		
Off-Farm	636	39.7
On-Farm	583	36.3
Non-Traditional	385	24.0
Totals	1604	100

The participants of the survey were asked to fill in the percentage of students conducting supervised agriculture experience (SAE) programs. The data contained in Table V revealed that one program (2.0 percent) reported only 10 percent of the students conducted SAE programs. Eleven respondents (23 percent) indicated that 100 percent of their students conducted SAE programs. On the average 79 percent of the students of the respondents were conducting SAE programs.

The most common response was made by 15 teachers (31.0 percent) who said that 90 percent of their students were conducting SAE programs.

TABLE V

A DISTRIBUTION BY LEVEL OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN SAE

Percentage %	ıency n
10	1
20	0
30	0
40	4
50	2
60	4
70	5
80	7
90	15
100	11

$\bar{X}$ = 79.0

The information revealed in Table VI described the importance of the SAE program for agriculture students. The most popular response made by 26 (54 percent) respondents was that, SAE was an "essential" component for agriculture students enrolled in agricultural education programs. Furthermore, thirteen teachers (26.6 percent) stated that the value of the SAE program was "very important", while ten (20.4 percent) indicated that the value of SAE programs for students was "important."

TABLE VI

A DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING AGRICULTURE STUDENTS INVOLVEMENT IN SAE PROGRAMS BY CATEGORIES OF VALUE

Categories of Value	Respondents n	Percentage %
Essential	26	53
Very Important	13	26.6
Important	10	20.4
Some Importance	0	0
No Importance	0	0
Totals	49	100

The data revealed in table VII regarding the number of on-site visits made to students with different kinds of SAE programs indicated that teachers perceived that student supervision was important.

The most visits, (29), were made to students with traditional production programs. Traditional production programs were followed by students with ownership Agribusiness programs with 14 visits. Students with no SAE program received the least number of visits, with 4 per year.

TABLE VII

A DISTRIBUTION OF THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF ON-SITE VISITS MADE BY RESPONDENTS TO STUDENTS' PROGRAMS DURING THE YEAR BY TYPE OF SAE PROGRAM

Type of SAE Program	Range of Avg. Visits	Average Visits	# Teachers Responding
Students with traditional production programs	5-300	29	46
Students with ownership agribusiness programs	3- 83	14	42
Students with on-farm placement programs	2- 36	11	37
Students with non-traditional and/or alternative agriculture programs	1- 64	13	38
Students with no SAE program	1- 15	4	30

Question 5 in Part II of the survey asked the participants the method or methods used to promote SAE programs. The data reported in Table VIII showed the method most used by 95% of the teacher-respondents was competitive activities. Skill development as a promotional technique was used by 81 percent of the respondents, while 85 percent of the teacher-respondents indicated that they used on-site supervision. Only 4 percent of the teachers reporting utilized methods not mentioned in the question. These included 8th grade orientation and having the SAE programs count as a portion of the students total grade.

TABLE VIII

A SUMMARY OF METHODS UTILIZED BY TEACHER-RESPONDENTS TO PROMOTE STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN SAE PROGRAMS BY INCENTIVE TO PARTICIPATE

Incentives to Participate	Frequency n	Percentage %
Conduct a meeting with students parents	36	73
Profitability	21	42
Skill development	40	81
Competitive activities	47	95
Opportunity to grow into an occupation	32	65
Learning the entry level requirements of agriculture careers	22	44
On-site supervision by ag-ed teachers	42	85
Other (8th grade orientation, 1/3 of grade)	2	4

The teachers surveyed were asked to rank the necessity of SAE programs as a part of the learning process in agricultural education. The one portion of the SAE program that had the highest rank was that it offered the opportunity for a "learning by doing" approach to agriculture. This was revealed in Table IX, which showed a mean response of 1.41. In addition to having the highest rank, the "learning by doing" approach also had the smallest standard deviation with a 1.05SD score. Other responses ranked as follows: offers the "opportunity for skill development"; offers the "opportunity to learn the art of decision making"; offers the "opportunity to experiment in an occupational area on a trial-run basis." Other areas mentioned by the teacher participants were "responsibility", "equity" and "experience in record keeping."

TABLE IX

A SUMMARY OF TEACHER-RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE NECESSITY OF SAE PROGRAMS AS A PART OF THE LEARNING PROCESS IN AGRICULTURE EDUCATION AS RANKED BY MEAN SCORE

A. Offers the Opportunity for a "Learning by Doing" Approach

1		2		3		4		5		Mean	Standard
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	Rank	Deviation
34	70.8	11	22.9	1	2.0	1	2.0	1	2.0	1.41	1.0

B. Offers the Opportunity for Skill Development

1		2		3		4		5		Mean	Standard
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	Rank	Deviation
5	10.4	23	48.9	17	36.4	2	4.2	0	0	2.34	2.14

TABLE IX (Continued)

C. Offers the Opportunity to Learn the Art of Decision Making

1		2		3		4		5		Mean	Standard
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	Rank	Deviation
5	10.8	10	21.7	23	50.0	8	17.3	0	0	2.73	2.80

D. Offers the Opportunity to Experiment in an Occupational Area on a Trial-Run Basis

1		2		3		4		5		Mean	Standard
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	Rank	Deviation
1	2.2	4	9.0	3	6.8	33	75.0	3	6.8	3.75	3.74

E. Others

	N
Responsibility	2
Equity	1
Experience in Record Keeping	5

Limitations regarding students conducting of SAE programs as perceived by the teachers in Table X showed that the one limitation that ranked highest overall was "financial support from parents/guardians." The other limitations ranked included: "lack of responsibility" with a mean score of 3.40; "lack of facilities" with a mean score of 3.51; "conflict with other school activities" with a mean score of 3.55; "little opportunity for profitability" with a mean score of 3.91; and, "peer pressure" with a mean score of 4.44. Furthermore, a great deal of difference was detected in the respondents' perceptions with regard to "peer pressure" and "little opportunity for profitability" with standard deviation of 4.71 and 4.16, respectively. In

addition, there was little noteable difference in the mean scores between "lack of responsibility", "lack of facilities", and "conflict with other school activities."

TABLE X

A SUMMARY OF TEACHER-RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE LIMITATIONS OF STUDENT SAE PROGRAMS AS RANKED BY MEAN SCORE

A. Conflict with Other School Activities

1		2		3		4		5		6		Mean	Standard
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	Rank	Deviation
5	11.1	8	17.7	10	22.2	7	15.5	9	20.0	6	13.3	3.55	3.79

B. Financial Support from Parents/Guardians

1		2		3		4		5		6		Mean	Standard
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	Rank	Deviation
17	37.7	13	28.8	5	11.1	6	13.3	2	4.4	2	4.4	2.31	3.69

C. Lack of Responsibility

1		2		3		4		5		6		Mean	Standard
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	Rank	Deviation
6	13.3	9	20.0	4	11.1	14	31.1	8	17.7	3	6.6	3.40	3.61

D. Lack of Facilities

1		2		3		4		5		6		Mean	Standard
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	Rank	Deviation
4	8.8	9	20.0	12	26.6	5	11.1	10	22.2	5	11.1	3.51	3.48

E. Peer Pressure

1		2		3		4		5		6		Mean	Standard
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	Rank	Deviation
5	11.1	2	4.4	6	13.3	6	13.3	7	15.5	19	42.2	4.44	4.71

F. Little Opportunity for Profitability

1		2		3		4		5		6		Mean	Standard
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	Rank	Deviation
5	11.1	5	11.1	8	17.7	8	17.7	9	20.0	10	22.2	3.91	4.16

Thirty benefit statements were rated. The rank order, mean values and standard deviations are presented in Table XI.

The five greatest SAE benefits received by students from SAE programs as perceived by the participants were: (1) "promotes responsibility"; (2) "encourages FFA participation"; (3) "promotes personal pride and satisfaction in work"; (4) "provides situation for individual instruction"; and, (5) "students learn how to make decisions."

In addition to the highest mean score and rank among the 30 selected benefits of student SAE programs, there was also a notable level of agreement among the respondents regarding "promotes responsibility" with a standard deviation of .688. Another interesting note included not only the mean scores of 4.25 for both "develops financial management skills" and "increases students' abilities to make business decisions", but identified standard deviation scores of .699 which indicated that both statements were similarly perceived by the teachers. A surprising finding was that the statement "encourages financial progress" was ranked 24th with a mean score of 4.02 and standard deviation of .910 which is an indication of a wide range of perceptions concerning this as an SAE benefit.

TABLE XI

A SUMMARY OF TEACHER-RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SELECTED SAE BENEFITS DERIVED BY STUDENTS AS RANKED BY MEAN SCORE

SAE Benefits	Rank[1]	Mean[2]	SD
Develops personal incentive	20T	4.08	.846
Promotes responsibility	1	4.68	.688
Students learn the ability to take a risk	26	4.00	1.106
Promotes interest in Agriculture	15T	4.14	.849
Develops occupational skills	24T	4.02	.910
Develops recordkeeping skills	7	4.33	.833
Develops Agri-business skills	15T	4.14	.849
Develops communication skills	23	4.04	.849
Students learn how to make decisions	5	4.39	.791
Provides student opportunity to grow into an occupational area	29	3.83	.930
Develops cooperation	22	4.06	.782
Develops citizenship	27	3.97	.933
Develops good work habits	8T	4.31	.802
Improves classroom learning and participation	14	4.18	.816
Promotes personal pride and satisfaction in work	3	4.43	.740
Develops financial management skills	12T	4.25	.699
Improves student learning	19	4.12	.814
Helps the student internalize what he/she is learning	15T	4.14	.849

TABLE XI (Continued)

	Rank[1]	Mean[2]	SD
Encourages financial progress	24T	4.02	.910
Encourages FFA participation	2	4.45	.797
Encourages further education	30	3.81	.937
Develops self-confidence	6	4.35	.757
Increases students ability to make business decisions	12T	4.25	.699
Promotes student development of long-range SAE plans	20T	4.08	.846
Develops the discipline of time management	10T	4.29	.712
Provides situation for individual instruction	4	4.41	.894
Teaches student to set and reach goals	10T	4.29	.712
Promotes personal growth and development	8T	4.31	.802
A sense of making a worthwhile contribution	15T	4.14	.849
Encourages students to seek economic independence	28	3.95	.874

[1] Overall rank determined by mean score
[2] Means on a 1-5 scale
T Tie in rank

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to present a summary of the following: 1) purpose and objectives of the study, and 2) the major findings of the research. In addition, as a result of the analysis of data and a thorough inspection of the findings, conclusions and recommendations were presented.

Purpose of Study

The major purpose of this study was to determine agricultural education teachers' perceptions of selected aspects about supervised agricultural experience programs and student benefits derived from those programs in Central Oklahoma.

Objectives of the Study

In order to accomplish the purpose of this study, the following objectives were established:

1. To identify selected demographic characteristics of agricultural education teachers and departments in Central Oklahoma.

2. To identify selected characteristics (strengths and weaknesses) about students' SAE programs as perceived by instructors in the Central District.
3. To determine, by rank, the perceived value of selected benefits derived from SAE programs by students as perceived by their instructors.

Summary of Population

The number of agricultural education instructors working under a 12 month contract during the 1988-89 academic year was 89. However, the intent and scope of the population established for this study was to survey a teacher representative from each of the 70 departments in the Central District. As a result, 49 (70.0 percent) agricultural education instructors returned usable questionnaires for the purpose of analysis of data and interpretation of the findings. An important summary note to the population was, at least one departmental representative in each of the 13 counties in the Central District responded to the survey.

Rationale for Design and Conduct of the Study

The objective of the study was to determine the perceptions of teachers concerning their SAE programs. The data was collected by questionnaire along with an

introductory letter stating the importance of the study. Seventy teachers were given the opportunity to take part in the study. Forty-nine (70.0 percent) teachers responded to the survey. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data collected. Real limits were also established in order to more adequately describe and quantify the data.

Major Findings of the Study

The major findings in this study were grouped into three sections. They were:

1. Teacher and Departmental Demographics
2. Description and Importance of SAE Programs
3. Benefits Derived from SAE Programs

Teacher and Departmental Demographics

Major findings showed that the 49 teachers as a group had an average of 11.63 years teaching experience, while over half the respondents had less than ten years experience.

The largest number, fourteen (28.56 percent), of programs had a range of 30-40 students, while the average program size was sixty students. The smallest group of programs reported two, (4.08 percent), had a range of 81-90 students. An interesting note was that no students were reported for the 91-100 range in student enrollment. However, eight respondents revealed that there were more than 100 students enrolled in their programs.

Teacher Perceptions

Description of SAE Programs

Community size was considered in this study as having an affect on SAE programs. Fifteen (30.60 percent) programs were in communities which were about evenly divided, rural/urban. Approximately 77 percent of the programs were in communities which had some rural influence, while 22 percent of the programs were urban or metropolitan communitites.

Types of SAE programs revealed in Table IV indicated that several students participated in both ownership and placement types of SAE programs. The largest percentage (62.1 percent) of ownership type of SAE programs were production agriculture. The placement type of SAE programs in which students were involved most often were off-farm placement with 39.7 percent and on-farm placement, 36.3 percent.

An important finding was that the 49 respondents reported that 79 percent of their students were involved in SAE programs of some type. However, fifteen teachers indicated that 90 percent of their Ag enrollment participated in some kind of SAE program.

Importance of SAE Programs

Twenty-six teachers (53 percent) considered the value of SAE programs for agriculture students as "essential",

while thirteen instructors (26.6 percent) stated the value as being "very important." Ten teachers (20.4 percent) stated that their perceived value of SAE programs was "important." All teachers surveyed gave the indication that the SAE was a necessary part of the total agricultural education program.

On-site Visits

Students with traditional production programs received the most supervision with an average of 29 visits per year. Students with no SAE programs received the least number of visits with an average of 4. However, on the average, teacher-respondents reported that their students had 20 supervised visits per year.

Methods Utilized to Promote SAE Programs

Teachers use several methods to get students involved in SAE programs. The most used method was "competitive activities." Two teachers (4 percent) stated that they used "8th grade orientation" and/or "the SAE program to count as a part of the students' class grade" to promote supervised experience programs. The respondents stated they utilized seven methods to promote SAE involvement. Of the seven, the two methods used the least were "profitability" and "learning the entry level requirements of agriculture careers." However, the two methods most often used by the

respondents were "competitive activities" and "on-site SAE supervision."

SAE as Part of the Learning Process

The teacher-respondents ranked the necessity of SAE programs high as part of the learning process in agricultural education in regard to: offers the "opportunity for a "learning by doing" approach", offers the "opportunity for skill development", offers the "opportunity to learn the art of decision making", and offers the "opportunity to experiment in an occupational area on a trial-run basis." In addition, several teachers mentioned benefits of SAE programs that they perceived to be important. They were: "promotes responsibility", "gains equity", and "gives students experience in recordkeeping."

Selected SAE Limitations

Teachers ranked SAE program limitations as they affect students in the most limiting order: 1) Financial support from parents/guardians, 2) lack of responsibility, 3) lack of facilities, 4) conflict with other school activities, 5) little opportunity for profitability, and 6) peer pressure. As reported, the major limitation on students involvement in SAE programs was the "lack of financial support from parents/guardians," while the least important factor affecting students participation was "peer pressure."

Selected Student Benefits

The teacher-respondents indicated that there were several benefits derived from participation in SAE programs. The "top ten" were ranked as follows in descending order: 1) Promotes responsibility, 2) encourages FFA participation, 3) promotes personal pride and satisfaction in work, 4) provides situation for individual instruction, 5) students learn how to make decisions, 6) develops self-confidence, 7) develops recordkeeping skills, 8) develops good work habits, 9) promotes personal growth and development, and 10) develops the discipline of time management.

Conclusions

Based on the major findings and interpretation of the data reported by the 49 teacher-respondents, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Based on the finding that the teachers had an average of 11.63 years of teaching experience and over half had less than ten years experience, it was apparent that the teaching corp in the Central District was rather young.
2. With regard to student enrollments reported in the study, it was evident there was a great deal of variability in enrollment from one program to another.
3. It was concluded that most Central District programs,

regardless of location or community size have considerable rural influence.

4. It was apparent that even though traditional production SAE programs remain popular among students, there seems to be a definite trend toward increased participation in placement programs.
5. Based on the finding that on the average 74 percent of the students in the departments reporting, conducted SAE programs, it was apparent that SAE programs were not only popular among students, but they also seem to perceive the value of conducting such programs and their (SAE's) logical approach to learning.
6. It was apparent from the findings that teacher-respondents believed in the concept that student SAE programs were an important part of a total agricultural education experience.
7. It was concluded that teacher-respondents in the Central District perceived the importance of on-site SAE visits and their pertinence to the well being of students.
8. It was evident from the findings that teachers saw a combination of methods to promote student involvement in SAE programs.
9. It was apparent, based on the findings, that teachers' still perceived the "learning by doing" approach in education as a major learning concept and unique in agricultural education circles.

10. It was evident from the findings that there were definite limitations to financial support from parents for students conducting SAE programs in the Central District.
11. Based on the findings and overall teacher rankings, it was concluded that SAE activities have an influence on the total program.
12. It was apparent from the major findings that the most important benefits derived by students from SAE programs were: 1) learning responsibility, 2) development of personal pride and satisfaction in one's work, 3) participation in FFA leadership activities, and 4) leading into situations where "a teachable moment is created or opportunities for individualized instruction."

Recommendations

As a result of the conclusions drawn and interpretation of the data the following recommendations were outlined:

1. It was recommended that teachers promote supervised agricultural experience programs to all students in order that they might profit from the opportunities afforded through experiental learning as well as leadership activities associated with their membership in youth organizations.

2. Based on the conclusions made, it was recommended that teachers expand opportunities for non-traditional and placement types of SAE programs in which students can participate.
3. Teachers should make more on-site visits to other types of SAE programs in addition to production agriculture and agribusiness.
4. Teachers should assist students in pursuing innovative sources of financial support other than parental assistance for conducting SAE programs.
5. It was further recommended that teachers make students and parents/guardians more aware of the benefits derived from conducting SAE programs.

Recommendations for Further Study

The following recommendations are made based upon the data collected for subsequent studies:

1. A study should be conducted to determine parent and student perceptions of benefits derived from SAE programs.
2. A case study should be conducted to compare perceptions of parents and students regarding the conduct and expectations of their involvement in SAE programs.
3. A study should be conducted to determine school administrators' perceptions of SAE programs and the benefits students derived from them.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

I. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:

1. Number of years of teaching experience:____

2. Size of Ag Ed enrollment:____

3. Which of the following statements **best** describes the background (community size) from which your students come? (check only one response)

____Almost Completely Rural
____Mostly Rural, but Some Urban
____About Evenly Divided Rural/Urban
____Almost Completely Urban
____Metropolitan

II. DESCRIPTION AND IMPORTANCE OF SAE PROGRAMS:

1. Type of SAE (Supervised Agriculture Experience) Program in which your Agricultural Education students are involved (percentage of students in each SAE area)?

A. Ownership:
___% Agribusiness
___% Production Agriculture
___% Non-Traditional (Alternative) Agriculture

B. Placement:
___% Off-Farm Placement (Agribusiness)
___% On-Farm Placement
___% Placement in Non-Traditional (Alternative) Agriculture

2. Percentage (%) of your Agricultural Education students conducting Supervised Agriculture Experience Programs (SAE)?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

(circle the most appropriate response)

3. Indicate your perceived importance of the value of Supervised Agriculture Experience Program (SAE) for Agricultural Education students:

____Essential
____Very Important
____Important
____Some Importance
____No Importance

4. Average number of SAE on-site visits made to student programs (average number of SAE visits per student) during the calendar year?

   A. _____ Students with traditional production programs
   B. _____ Students with ownership agribusiness programs
   C. _____ Students with on-farm placement programs
   D. _____ Students with non-traditional and/or alternative agriculture programs
   E. _____ Students with no SAE programs

5. Indicate the method(s) utilized in your program to promote Supervised Agricultural Experience Programs (SAE) as a student learning experience:

   ____Conduct a Meeting with Students' Parents
   ____Profitability
   ____Skill Development
   ____Competitive Activities (Fairs, Shows, etc.)
   ____Opportunity to Grow into an Occupation
   ____Learning the Entry Level Requirements of Agriculture Courses
   ____On-Site Supervision by Vo-Ag Teacher
   ____Other (please specify)_____

6. Indicate the necessity of Supervised Agriculture Experience Programs (SAE) as a part of the learning process in Agricultural Education courses by rank ordering the following statements:

   ____Offers the Opportunity for a "Learning By Doing" Approach
   ____Offers the Opportunity for Skill Development
   ____Offers the Opportunity to Learn the Art of Decision Making
   ____Offers the Opportunity to Experiment in an Occupational Area on a Trial-run Basis
   ____Other (please specify)_____

7. Indicate your perception of the selected limitations listed by ranking the following perceived limitations of SAE Programs in order:

   ____Conflict with other school activities
   ____Financial support from parents/guardians
   ____Lack of responsibility
   ____Lack of facilities
   ____Peer pressure
   ____Little opportunity for profitability

III. **STUDENTS BENEFITS DERIVED AS A RESULT OF CONDUCTING AN SAE PROGRAM: (Please rank the list of 30 selected SAE benefit statements on the 1 to 5 scale)**

1 = little or no benefit
3 = average benefit
5 = great benefit

1.	Develops personal incentive	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Promotes responsibility	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Students learn the ability to take a risk	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Promotes interest in Agriculture	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Develops occupational skills	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Develops recordkeeping skills	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Develops Agri-business skills	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Develops communication skills	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Students learn how to make decisions	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Provides student opportunity to grow into an occupational area	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Develops cooperation	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Develops citizenship	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Develops good work habits	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Improves classroom learning and participation	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Promotes personal pride and satisfaction in work	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Develops financial management skills	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Improves student learning	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Helps the student internalize what he/she is learning	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Encourages financial progress	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Encourages FFA participation	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Encourages further education	1	2	3	4	5

22.	Develops self-confidence	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Increases students ability to make business decisions	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Promotes student development of long-range SAE plans	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Develops the discipline of time management	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Provides situation for individual instruction	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Teaches student to set and reach goals	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Promotes personal growth & development	1	2	3	4	5
29.	A sense of making a worthwhile contribution	1	2	3	4	5
30.	Encourages students to seek economic independence	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF FIRST MAILING

April 21, 1989

Dear Vo-Ag Instructor:

I am currently teaching vocational agriculture at Carney High School and trying to complete my Master of Science Degree in Agriculture Education at Oklahoma State University.

Enclosed you will find a questionnaire I am sending out to Vocational Agriculture teachers in Oklahoma. I would appreciate it if you could spare a few minutes of your valuable time to complete this questionnaire and return in the self-addressed, stamped envelope enclosed. I hope that I may have your response by May 5, 1989.

This questionnaire will aid in my research to complete my thesis titled: Vocational Agriculture Teachers Perceptions of SOE Programs in North Central Oklahoma."

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

James E. Ramsey

JR/lr

enclosure

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF SECOND MAILING

June 12, 1989

Dear Vo-Ag Instructor:

Enclosed you will find another copy of the survey instrument which I mailed to you in April. I urge you to please complete the survey and return to me in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope. This survey will only take a few minutes to complete and is very valuable in my research concerning supervised agricultural experience programs.

Not only are you assisting me in completing my thesis for a Master's degree in Agriculture Education but are also contributing to research pertaining to the need, use and importance of S.A.E. Programs.

Please take a few minutes of your time to complete this survey and return to me as soon as posssible. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

James E. Ramsey

JR/lr

enclosure

VITA

James Edward Ramsey

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SELECTED ASPECTS OF SUPERVISED AGRICULTURE EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS AND STUDENT BENEFITS DERIVED FROM THOSE PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL OKLAHOMA.

Major Field: Agricultural Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Cushing, Oklahoma, February 2, 1958, the son of Mary Baker.

Education: Graduated from Perkins-Tryon High School, Perkins, Oklahoma in May, 1976; attended Murray State College at Tishimingo, Oklaoma from August, 1976 through May, 1978; received Bachelor of Science in Agriculture degree from Oklahoma State University in 1980 with a major of Agriculture Education.

Professional Experience: Vocational Agriculture Instructor, Carney High School, Carney, Oklahoma, July, 1980 to present, July, 1989.

Professional Organizations: Member of National and Oklahoma Vocational Agriculture Teachers Associations, American Vocational Association and Oklahoma Education Association.