

TEACHER AND COLLEGE STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF  
ITEMS INFLUENTIAL IN THE DECISION TO  
TEACH VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE

By

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Every person in the United States is either directly or indirectly associated with agriculture. Because of the importance of agriculture in America, efforts must be made to continue the education and increase the knowledge of the agricultural work force so as to assure an ample supply of the products which feed and clothe the country's rapidly expanding population. However, the assurance of an adequate supply of agricultural educators being available to provide the knowledge and training necessary to advance technology and increase production is one aspect of the industry which is questionable. This is found to be true especially in the case of vocational agriculture teachers, who have long been the principle educators of the rural farm population.

Studies conducted by Woodin (1) on pages 1 and 2 concerning the supply and demand of vocational agriculture teachers support this statement. Through his work he found that there is a continuing shortage of vocational agriculture teachers which was present in the initial study in 1965 and increased slightly throughout the following eight years.

Before any solution to this problem can be obtained, several questions must be answered. It is hoped that this study will provide basic information which can be used as a step toward solving some of the questions associated with recruiting potential vocational agriculture teachers.

### Problem

The increasing shortage of vocational agriculture teachers in the United States presents a serious problem to the people involved in training the youth of America. The central problem dealt with in this study was that of recruitment of potential vocational agriculture teachers. Emphasis was placed on attempting to determine some of the factors involved in a person's decision to qualify to teach vocational agriculture in Oklahoma.

### Purpose

The primary purpose of this study was to identify and describe self-judgments, influence of selected individuals, and other characteristics which could be recognized as associated with an individual's decision to pursue the profession of teaching vocational agriculture in Oklahoma. Since there have been relatively few investigations made of factors associated with decision making in this area, the information obtained should be of value to persons associated with the task of recruiting and training future vocational agriculture teachers in the state of Oklahoma.

### Objectives

In this study the author hoped to determine the following:

1. Identification of the person or persons having had the greatest influence on the individual's decision to enter the agricultural education field.
2. Establishment of self-judgments as to what aspects of the agriculture teaching profession were most appealing.



3. Self-judgments as to sources and situations most influential in achieving final confirmation of the decision to attempt an assumption of responsibilities of a vocational agriculture teacher.

### Methodology

Data for this study was obtained through the use of a survey administered to approximately 60 students enrolled in agricultural education at Oklahoma State University and 100 vocational agriculture teachers in Oklahoma. Nearly one-half of the above students were surveyed just prior to their student teaching period; the remainder of the students surveyed consisted largely of juniors and first semester seniors. The group of student teachers consisted of all those students who were involved in fulfilling their student teaching assignment during the spring semester of 1974. The junior and first semester senior groups were enrolled in an agricultural education class and did not represent a random sampling of agricultural education students enrolled at Oklahoma State University.

The teachers surveyed were divided into two groups which consisted of those having less than ten years teaching experience and those having eleven or more years teaching experience. Twenty teachers were surveyed in each of the five districts in Oklahoma. These teachers represented a random sample within each district.

The data obtained was compiled and evaluated using numbers of responses and the percent of individuals making particular responses to the different questions. Each criterion had five possible responses: very great, great, some, little, and none, with values of five, four,

three, two, and one, respectively. The criterion was then assigned a respective score using the above values and ranked from highest to lowest.

Comparisons were made between the three groups of individuals surveyed. These groups were the collective group of students, the group of experienced teachers, and the group of teachers with a lesser degree of experience.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of literature was conducted by the author to better acquaint him with the areas related to the teacher shortage. The information obtained provided some basis as to the causes of the shortage. Along with the teacher shortage, consideration was given to the areas of vocational guidance and counseling and recruitment procedures.

#### Teacher Shortage

Unlike most areas of the educational profession, which are experiencing a surplus of teachers, the agricultural education field is feeling the pressures of a continuing shortage.

In studies conducted by Woodin (1) it was found that there has been a serious shortage in the number of qualified teachers of vocational agriculture in each of the years the study was conducted. In 1972 he found that 1,458 teachers were needed for replacements and for new teaching positions. With only 1,330 of the positions filled, a shortage of 128 teachers was recognized. It should also be pointed out that 74 of these departments could not operate because of the need for a teacher. One factor which contributed to the continuation of the problem was the fact that only 54.8 percent of the 1,759 individuals qualifying to teach entered the agriculture teaching ranks. The

remaining 45.8 percent entered other occupations such as the armed services, teaching other subjects, farm sales and services, farming, and graduate work.

A downward trend in the number of students enrolling in colleges of agriculture may also be considered as a causal factor of the shortage.

Frech (2) on page 168 stated that:

The number of agricultural students in proportion to the total land grant college student enrollment has decreased consistently for the last twenty years. It is predicted that if present enrollment trends continue, agricultural colleges will not be graduating enough men to fill agricultural positions that require college training.

This appears to point out the necessity to not only encourage and influence individuals to pursue a career in agricultural education but also to encourage enrollment in any area of agriculture because an increase of this kind would probably help to alleviate the teacher shortage by increasing the collective number of agriculture students. The first step in accomplishing an increased enrollment in the College of Agriculture would appear to be an improvement in the vocational guidance and counseling area, which will be dealt with in the following section.

#### Vocational Guidance and Counseling

Recognition of the need for persons trained in counseling and guidance is great, as evidenced by the increasing number of high schools establishing special departments for the direction of students in various subject matter areas (3). But are the counselors relating the true picture of some vocational areas to the students? Is agriculture one of these areas being "short-changed" in that students are discouraged from enrolling in agriculture courses by a majority of guidance

counselors? People associated with agriculture could possibly answer yes to both questions.

It is felt that Frush (4) reveals the basic cause of this problem in the following statement found on page 10:

The effective counselor looks at his role in an objective manner. He tries not to appear to give greater prominence to one occupational field than to another, but he is subjected to many influences. Many counselors do not have an experimental background in agriculture. Their training may not have included information about agricultural careers.

Although the guidance counselor is usually the one receiving the largest portion of blame for the discrimination against agriculture, the author also found guidance materials that do not portray a true picture of the overall scope of modern agriculture.

According to Siffered (5), expectations are that the numbers of both farm operators and farm workers will continue to decline, and some persons think that by 1975 one-fourth less persons may be needed in agriculture than were needed in 1960. This trend would stem from an even greater mechanization of farms.

Today, each farm worker supplies food and fiber for himself and for more than 24 additional other persons.

A few farmers with small acreages which do not require all of their time work at something else part-time. They do spraying, well digging, garage repair work, butchering, and dressing of poultry for other farmers who do not have the time, skill, or equipment to do these jobs.

Another source describes the occupational and industrial structure of agriculture. Farming was the only agricultural occupation listed along with the following description: Farming involves the planting, raising, and harvesting of crops or the breeding and care of poultry, livestock, or other farm animals. The only listing under the industrial

structure was agricultural services. It was described as including establishments which are primarily engaged in performing agricultural, animal husbandry, and horticultural services on a fee or contract basis (6).

It appeared that much work is needed in this area. Students must be provided with materials that present an up-to-date and reliable picture of today's agricultural industry.

Although the largest portion of materials researched portrayed a rather biased picture against occupational opportunities in agriculture, it was rather encouraging to find that educators and others associated with agriculture are realizing the necessity for improved programs of vocational guidance in our public schools.

For example, in Alabama an extensive career education program is being implemented in the junior high schools. In this program students are exposed to the broad world of work in the seventh and eighth grades and narrow down to 16 occupational objectives or clusters during the ninth and tenth grades. In the tenth grade the agriculture students continue their studies in one of three occupational clusters which consist of (1) agribusiness, (2) mechanics and metals, and (3) building construction (7). Students having basic career information this early in their high school education will be better prepared to narrow their career selection.

Also, another program dealing with occupational education has been placed into operation in the Mayer Public Schools, Mayer, Arizona. This program consists of three major divisions or means of obtaining information. They are (1) computerized guidance information, (2) employment data, and (3) personalized hands-on experience and programmed

instruction. In the first phase students have access to computer programmed information on (1) occupations, (2) junior colleges, (3) four-year colleges, and (4) scholarships. The second phase of the program, Employment Data, consists of weekly printouts of all the reported available jobs in Arizona along with the pay scale, age and educational requirements, and differences between communities relating to these factors. In the third phase of the program resource people are brought in to demonstrate their professions, providing hands-on experience through the vocational programs operating in this particular school system (8).

In the following statement Halcomb (7), page 47, clearly explains the necessity for career education:

Students cannot be expected to wisely select an area for specialized study unless they have been properly oriented or exposed to the basic and exploratory courses in the lower grades (7-10). A good job of career guidance must be done in order for students to determine their likes and dislikes concerning different occupations and occupational areas.

It appears as evidenced above the career education not only in agriculture but in all other areas is now being given the attention and improvement which has long been needed.

#### Recruitment

Webster (9), page 716, gives this definition of recruitment:

". . . to enlist new members."

In the process of alleviating the shortage of vocational agriculture teachers this is exactly what must be accomplished. New people with an interest in the future of agriculture must be enlisted into the agriculture teaching ranks. Therefore, a highly coordinated recruitment effort must be made.

The American Vocational Association, a national organization of vocational educators, recognized the problem of an increasing shortage of vocational agriculture teachers and therefore, through the Agricultural Division, created a committee to investigate, develop, and implement a recruitment program. Robert Price (10), a former committee member and chairman, outlined the following activities which were conducted in the recruitment program:

1. Development of a slide presentation to be shown to high school students.
2. Encouragement of state departments of vocational agriculture to establish advisory committees to assist in recruitment.
3. Sponsoring of a booth at the National Future Farmers of America Convention which portrays careers available in vocational agriculture.
4. Conducting an annual study concerning the supply and demand of vocational agriculture teachers.

Although work is being conducted in the area of recruitment, a great deal more is needed, as evidenced by the continuing teacher shortage. A possible solution to the recruitment problem might well be implementation and maintenance of an extensive, carefully constructed plan involving present teachers, teacher educators and supervisors, and state officials.

Sandburg (11) on pages 36-37 gives an excellent example as to the steps to follow in conducting a successful recruitment program. It is realized these steps are tailored to the recruitment of college graduates as teachers, but, in essence, they can be related to any situation requiring an increase in the number of persons available for employment. The steps are as follow:



1. Plan ahead for district needs. Recruiting should be considered a long-term investment in human capital. The significant payoff may not come for five years. Projection of teacher needs, based on anticipated student growth patterns and looking more than one year ahead, is essential to successful planning.
2. Select the proper recruiter. The recruiter must know the jobs to be filled, and be free to fill them with the best qualified persons he can find. Handling the interview and adjusting to the candidate require talent and training, and the experienced recruiter who is warm, friendly, and well-trained will get more good teachers than the novice or part-time recruiter. Age is no barrier to being a good interviewer.
3. Coordinate the recruiting. Recruiting cannot be left to individual school personnel; it should be done through a central office. The recruiter is responsible for presenting the school district's image to applicants, and showing why the job is a real opportunity.
4. Compile a thorough brochure. A recruiting brochure with direct appeal encourages the right candidates to interview. It should include information about the school system, its course of study, the types of positions available, and the qualifications and characteristics needed to fill these positions.
5. Prepare with research. Alert recruiters do a great deal of research; they know, for instance, how their teachers' salaries, class loads, and working conditions compare with other districts. They also follow up both the candidates who accept their offers and those who do not, to find out what has affected their decisions.
6. Plan the interview carefully. Effective recruiters tailor these steps to fit each candidate: (a) a brief run-through of the candidate's resume prior to his arrival; (b) a minute or so of small talk; (c) a time for the candidate to tell about his background, training, and interests; (d) identification of the job for which the candidate is applying; (e) questions between the recruiter and candidate . . . ; (f) getting information on where to contact the candidate; . . .

The above steps should give some indication as to the complexity of a successful recruiting program. If a recruiting effort of this caliber was put into operation by the agriculture educators, the shortage of qualified teachers of vocational agriculture should be reduced and could possibly be eliminated.

## CHAPTER III

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter concerns the presentation and analysis of data collected from the survey administered to the group of agricultural education students and the two groups of vocational agriculture teachers, which are designated as Groups A, B, and C, respectively. Group A was comprised of students enrolled in an agricultural education class at Oklahoma State University along with those students fulfilling their student teaching requirement during the spring semester of 1974. Teachers of vocational agriculture having taught for ten years or less made up Group B and are referred to as less-experienced teachers. Group C was made up of teachers having taught vocational agriculture for 11 or more years and are referred to as experienced teachers.

The results of this study are presented in three sections. They are as follow:

1. Individuals influential in a person's decision to qualify to teach vocational agriculture.
2. Characteristics of the job of teaching vocational agriculture most appealing to persons choosing to qualify to teach vocational agriculture.
3. Sources of final confirmation for choosing to teach vocational agriculture.

### Influential Individuals

Data presented in Tables I through III show the results of responses as to which person or persons were influential in an individual's decision to qualify to teach vocational agriculture. A composite of the three groups' responses are shown in Table IV.

In examining Table I, which contains the responses of Group A, it was found that the local Vo-Ag teacher was ranked number one, with 62.5 percent responding that this influence was "very great." The vocational agriculture teacher received an average score of 4.30, while the parents and college instructors, which ranked second and third, respectively, had scores of 3.66 and 3.64. This points out the great influence which local vocational agriculture teachers have on their students, especially those choosing to pursue a career in agricultural education. Also, it should be noted that the high school counselor ranked last, with an average score of 1.89, and that other high school teachers had a much higher score and rank than did the counselor.

In analyzing the responses of Group B, which are shown in Table II, rankings of the top three influencing factors were found to be identical to those in Table I. The local vocational agriculture teacher again received a decisively higher average score than did the parents and college instructors, although the scores of the latter factors were not so close as was found in the responses by Group A, with parents having a somewhat higher score of 3.69 as compared to the 3.26 score received by the college instructors. Also, factors shown to be somewhat influential and ranking fourth and fifth were local farmers and fellow college students, with scores of 2.67 and 2.54, respectively. It should be pointed out that the high school counselor again received the lowest ranking,

TABLE I

RANKING OF SELECTED INFLUENTIALS BY STUDENTS (GROUP A) IN TERMS OF THEIR  
CHOOSING VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHING AS A CAREER

Influencing Factor	Very Great		Great		Some		Little		None		Average Score	Rank
	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent		
Local Vo-Ag teacher	35	62.5	12	21.4	4	7.1	1	1.8	4	7.1	4.30	1
Other high school teachers	0	0.0	6	10.7	29	51.8	11	19.6	10	17.9	2.59	7
Parents	14	25.0	21	37.5	12	21.4	6	10.7	3	5.4	3.66	2
Other relatives	1	1.8	15	26.8	20	35.7	10	17.9	10	17.9	2.77	6
Fellow students (high school)	4	7.1	8	14.3	18	32.1	11	19.6	15	26.8	2.55	8
Fellow students (college)	9	16.1	17	30.4	15	26.8	8	14.3	7	12.5	3.23	4
College instructors	13	23.2	22	39.3	15	26.8	--	--	6	10.7	3.64	3
High school counselor	2	3.6	4	7.1	11	19.6	8	14.3	31	55.4	1.89	10
Local farmer	7	12.5	12	21.4	17	30.4	7	12.5	13	23.2	2.88	5
Other adults in home community	2	3.6	11	19.6	17	30.4	11	19.6	15	26.8	2.54	9

TABLE II

RANKING OF SELECTED INFLUENTIALS BY LESS EXPERIENCED TEACHERS (GROUP B) IN  
TERMS OF THEIR CHOOSING VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHING AS A CAREER

Influencing Factor	Very Great		Great		Some		Little		None		Average Score	Rank
	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent		
Local Vo-Ag teacher	19	48.7	10	25.6	5	12.8	1	2.6	4	10.3	4.00	1
Other high school teachers	2	5.1	5	12.8	10	25.6	13	33.3	9	23.1	2.44	6
Parents	8	20.5	18	46.2	8	20.5	3	7.7	2	5.1	3.69	2
Other relatives	0	0.0	4	10.3	16	41.0	9	23.1	10	25.6	2.36	8
Fellow students (high school)	1	2.6	1	2.6	11	28.2	13	33.3	13	33.3	2.08	9
Fellow students (college)	0	0.0	5	12.8	17	43.6	11	28.2	6	15.4	2.54	5
College instructors	3	7.7	11	28.2	20	51.3	3	7.7	2	5.1	3.26	3
High school counselor	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	7.7	3	7.7	33	84.6	1.23	10
Local farmer	0	0.0	4	10.3	23	59.0	7	17.9	5	12.8	2.67	4
Other adults in home community	1	2.6	4	10.3	14	35.9	10	25.6	10	25.6	2.38	7

with an even lower score of 1.23, with approximately 85 percent of the individuals indicating that the counselor had no influence at all on their decision to pursue a career in teaching vocational agriculture.

Responses obtained from Group C are shown in Table III. Once again the factors ranking one, two, and three were local vocational agriculture teacher, parents, and college instructors, with respective scores of 3.25, 3.23, and 3.05. It should be noted that these scores are relatively lower in this group of responses, with the local vocational agriculture teacher and parents having approximately identical scores. The lower score of the local vocational agriculture teacher could be attributed to the fact that one-fourth of the persons indicated this person had no influence on them, which possibly extends from the fact that several were not involved in a vocational agriculture program during their secondary education. Fellow college students and relatives other than parents were found to be of some influence, with scores of 2.66 and 2.55. Ranking last once more was the high school counselor, with 88.6 percent of the respondents indicating they were not influenced by the counselor. This response was necessary for a majority of the individuals because they noted they did not have access to a high school counselor, although of the 11.3 percent who indicated receiving some influence from the counselor none received a "great" or "very great" amount.

Findings as shown in Table IV provide a composite of the average scores and rank between the three groups. As pointed out in the previous discussions, the three factors found to be most influential were the local vocational agriculture instructor, parents, and college instructors. These were followed closely, in order of rank, by fellow

TABLE III

RANKING OF SELECTED INFLUENTIALS BY EXPERIENCED TEACHERS (GROUP C) IN TERMS  
OF THEIR CHOOSING VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHING AS A CAREER

Influencing Factor	Very Great		Great		Some		Little		None		Average Score	Rank
	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent		
Local Vo-Ag teacher	12	27.3	10	22.7	10	22.7	1	2.3	11	25.0	3.25	1
Other high school teachers	1	2.3	3	6.8	14	31.8	7	15.9	19	43.2	1.45	9
Parents	7	15.9	12	27.3	15	34.1	4	9.1	6	13.6	3.23	2
Other relatives	5	11.4	7	15.9	9	20.5	9	20.5	14	31.8	2.55	5
Fellow students (high school)	0	0.0	4	9.1	9	20.5	11	25.0	20	45.5	1.93	8
Fellow students (college)	2	4.5	8	18.2	19	43.2	3	6.8	12	27.3	2.66	4
College instructors	2	4.5	13	29.5	20	45.5	3	6.8	6	13.6	3.05	3
High school counselor	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	4.5	3	6.8	39	88.6	1.23	10
Local farmer	2	4.5	9	20.5	8	18.2	9	20.5	16	36.4	2.36	6
Other adults in home community	3	6.8	3	6.8	13	29.5	10	22.7	15	34.1	2.30	7

TABLE IV

COMPOSITE OF AVERAGE SCORES AND RANKINGS OF INFLUENTIAL INDIVIDUALS  
BY THE THREE RESPONDENT GROUPS

Influencing Factor	Average Scores and Rank by Group						Overall	
	A		B		C		Score	Rank
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank		
Local Vo-Ag teacher	4.30	1	4.00	1	3.25	1	3.85	1
Other high school teachers	2.59	7	2.44	6	1.45	9	2.16	9
Parents	3.66	2	3.69	2	3.23	2	3.53	2
Other relatives	2.77	6	2.36	8	2.55	5	2.56	6
Fellow students (high school)	2.55	8	2.08	9	1.93	8	2.19	8
Fellow students (college)	3.23	4	2.54	5	2.66	4	2.81	4
College instructors	3.64	3	3.26	3	3.05	3	3.32	3
High school counselor	1.89	10	1.23	10	1.23	10	1.45	10
Local farmer	2.88	5	2.67	4	2.36	6	2.64	5
Other adults in home community	2.54	9	2.38	7	2.30	7	2.41	7



college students, local farmer, and relatives other than parents. The high school counselor remained last in the rankings, with a composite score of 1.45.

#### Appealing Characteristics of the Vocational Agriculture Teaching Job

Data to be presented in this section is shown in Tables V, VI, and VII, with the composite of average scores and ranks being found in Table VIII.

In analyzing data obtained from Group A, which is shown in Table V, it was found that all the job characteristics were of "some" influence, with the lowest average score being 3.14, which was received by the characteristic "opportunity to move into full-time farming." Ranking first in this group was "opportunity to continue work with livestock," with 58.9 percent of the individuals indicating this was a "very great" influence. Following next in rank were four rather closely related characteristics: (a) "opportunity to work with youth" with a score of 4.43; (b) "to achieve a broad knowledge of agriculture" with a score of 4.34; (c) "self-satisfaction of helping to educate students" scoring 4.34; and (d) "opportunity to advance professionally in agriculture," which received a score of 4.20. It should also be pointed out that "anticipated salary" ranked eleventh, just before "opportunity to move into full-time farming," but it should be kept in mind that even though these two characteristics were assigned the lower average scores, they were of "some" influence.

Findings as presented in Table VI consist of data collected from responses made by individuals comprising Group B. In examining these

TABLE V

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JOB OF TEACHING VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE RATED IN TERMS OF APPEAL  
TO STUDENTS' (GROUP A) CHOOSING TO TEACH VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE

Job Characteristics	Very Great		Great		Some		Little		None		Average Score	Rank
	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent		
Anticipated salary	1	1.8	17	30.4	29	51.8	8	14.3	1	1.8	3.16	11
Anticipated prestige in community	4	7.1	23	41.1	23	41.1	6	10.7	--	--	3.45	10
Opportunity to work with youth	27	48.2	26	46.4	3	5.4	--	--	--	--	4.43	2
Opportunity to work with adult farmers	12	21.4	23	41.1	18	32.1	3	5.4	--	--	3.79	7
Opportunity to continue work with livestock	33	58.9	19	33.9	4	7.1	--	--	--	--	4.52	1
To achieve a broad knowledge of agriculture	27	48.2	21	37.5	8	14.3	--	--	--	--	4.34	3
Opportunity to advance professionally in agriculture	23	41.1	22	39.3	10	17.9	1	1.8	--	--	4.20	5
Opportunity to engage in part-time farming	15	26.8	20	35.7	14	25.0	7	12.5	--	--	3.77	8
Opportunity to move into full-time farming	5	8.9	20	35.7	15	26.8	10	17.9	6	10.7	3.14	12
Self-satisfaction of helping to educate students	21	37.5	28	50.0	7	12.5	--	--	--	--	4.25	4
Anticipated working conditions	8	14.3	24	42.9	18	32.1	5	8.9	1	1.8	3.59	9
Opportunity for continuing involvement in FFA	19	33.9	24	42.9	10	17.9	2	3.6	1	1.8	4.04	6

TABLE VI

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JOB OF TEACHING VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE RATED IN TERMS OF APPEAL TO LESS EXPERIENCED TEACHERS' (GROUP B) CHOOSING TO TEACH VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE

Job Characteristics	Very Great		Great		Some		Little		None		Average Score	Rank
	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent		
Anticipated salary	0	0.0	6	15.4	25	64.1	7	17.9	1	2.6	2.92	12
Anticipated prestige in community	1	2.6	12	30.8	22	56.4	4	10.3	0	0.0	3.26	10
Opportunity to work with youth	22	56.4	16	41.0	1	2.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.54	2
Opportunity to work with adult farmers	2	5.1	23	59.0	10	25.6	4	10.3	0	0.0	3.59	8
Opportunity to continue work with livestock	25	64.1	12	30.8	1	2.6	1	2.6	0	0.0	4.56	1
To achieve a broad knowledge of agriculture	18	46.2	12	30.8	6	15.4	2	5.1	1	2.6	4.13	4
Opportunity to advance professionally in agriculture	16	41.0	10	25.6	9	23.1	3	7.7	1	2.6	3.72	6
Opportunity to engage in part-time farming	9	23.1	17	43.6	7	17.9	4	10.3	2	5.1	3.69	7
Opportunity to move into full-time farming	6	15.4	6	15.4	12	30.8	13	33.3	2	5.1	3.03	11
Self-satisfaction of helping to educate students	16	41.0	19	48.7	4	10.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.31	3
Anticipated working conditions	5	12.8	17	43.6	5	12.8	9	23.1	3	7.7	3.31	9
Opportunity for continuing involvement in FFA	15	38.5	16	41.0	5	12.8	2	5.1	1	2.6	4.08	5

data it was found that "opportunity to continue work with livestock" was again ranked first, with a score of 4.56. Ranking second with an average score of 4.54 was "opportunity to work with youth." These scores are much closer than was found in the responses made by the Group A individuals. The third and fourth ranked characteristics, "self-satisfaction of helping to educate students" and "to achieve a broad knowledge of agriculture," were found to be in a reverse order than was the case in the Group A responses. Also, "opportunity for continuing involvement in FFA" and "opportunity to advance professionally in agriculture" exchanged the fifth and sixth rankings with scores of 4.08 and 3.72. Continuing to be ranked last were the characteristics "opportunity to move into full-time farming" and "anticipated salary," which also reversed rankings from the preceding table.

Data found in Table VII was compiled from responses made by the Group C individuals. Once more, "opportunity to continue work with livestock" ranked first, closely followed by "opportunity to work with youth," having respective average scores of 4.27 and 4.18. The third and fourth ranked characteristics remained the same as was found in Table VI, although moving into the fifth position was "opportunity to work with adult farmers," which had previously been ranked seventh and eighth. Again ranking last was "anticipated salary" and "opportunity to move into full-time farming."

A composite of the average scores and rank between the three responding groups is shown in Table VIII. In examining the composite it was noted that the first four ranked characteristics were essentially identical to that pointed out in the previous discussions. It should also be noted that the fifth and sixth ranked characteristics had approximately the same average score.

TABLE VII

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JOB OF TEACHING VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE AS RATED IN TERMS OF APPEAL TO EXPERIENCED TEACHERS' (GROUP C) CHOOSING TO TEACH VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE

Job Characteristics	Very Great		Great		Some		Little		None		Average Score	Rank
	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent		
Anticipated salary	4	9.1	19	43.2	16	36.4	4	9.1	1	2.3	3.11	11
Anticipated prestige in community	1	2.3	13	29.5	22	50.0	7	15.9	1	2.3	3.14	10
Opportunity to work with youth	15	34.1	23	52.3	5	11.4	1	2.3	0	0.0	4.18	2
Opportunity to work with adult farmers	6	13.6	23	52.3	11	25.0	3	6.8	1	2.3	3.68	5
Opportunity to continue work with livestock	18	40.9	20	45.5	6	13.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.27	1
To achieve a broad knowledge of agriculture	9	20.5	18	40.9	15	34.1	1	2.3	1	2.3	3.75	4
Opportunity to advance professionally in agriculture	5	11.4	20	45.5	15	34.1	2	4.5	2	4.5	3.55	6
Opportunity to engage in part-time farming	5	11.4	19	43.2	9	20.5	8	18.2	3	6.8	3.34	9
Opportunity to move into full-time farming	4	9.1	7	15.9	12	27.3	11	25.0	10	22.7	2.64	12
Self-satisfaction of helping to educate students	10	22.7	25	56.8	8	18.2	0	0.0	1	2.3	3.98	3
Anticipated working conditions	4	9.1	18	40.9	16	36.4	4	9.1	2	4.5	3.49	7 (tie)
Opportunity for continuing involvement in FFA	7	15.9	15	34.1	15	34.1	3	6.8	4	9.1	3.49	7 (tie)

TABLE VIII

COMPOSITE OF AVERAGE SCORES AND RANKINGS OF APPEALING JOB  
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE THREE RESPONDENT GROUPS

Job Characteristics	Average Score and Rank by Group							
	A		B		C		Overall	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Anticipated salary	3.16	11	2.92	12	3.11	11	3.06	11
Anticipated prestige in community	3.45	10	3.26	10	3.14	10	3.28	10
Opportunity to work with youth	4.43	2	4.54	2	4.18	2	4.38	2
Opportunity to work with adult farmers	3.79	7	3.59	8	3.68	5	3.69	7
Opportunity to continue work with livestock	4.52	1	4.56	1	4.27	1	4.45	1
To achieve a broad knowledge of agriculture	4.34	3	4.13	4	3.75	4	4.07	4
Opportunity to advance professionally in agriculture	4.20	5	3.72	6	3.55	6	3.82	6
Opportunity to engage in part-time farming	3.77	8	3.69	7	3.34	9	3.60	8
Opportunity to engage in full-time farming	3.14	12	3.03	11	2.64	12	2.94	12
Self-satisfaction of helping to educate students	4.25	4	4.31	3	3.98	3	4.18	3
Anticipated working conditions	3.59	9	3.31	9	3.49	7	3.46	9
Opportunity for continuing involvement in FFA	4.04	6	4.08	5	3.49	7	3.87	5

### Sources of Final Confirmation

Data presented in this section were obtained from the responses of individuals in each of the three groups in response to inquiry as to sources most responsible for decisions resulting in final confirmation of job choice. This information is presented in Tables IX, X, and XI. Also, a composite of the average scores and rankings is shown in Table XII.

In analyzing the responses made by Group A, it was found that "observation at events" ranked first with a score of 4.13 and was followed closely in rank by "your own experience in Vo-Ag" and "Agricultural Education teachers in college," yielding identical scores of 4.07. However, it should be noted that the two second ranked sources had higher percentages of "very great" responses than did the source ranking first. Also scoring relatively high and ranking fourth and fifth were "extended conference with Ag teacher" and "supervisors and officials in vocational agriculture." Ranking last was "brochures, bulletins, etc.," even though 19.6 percent of the individuals responded that this source was of "great" influence.

By examining the data obtained from the Group B individuals (Table X), it was found that the source "your own experience in Vo-Ag" was ranked first, with an average score of 4.33. Following closely with a score of 4.05 and ranking second was "observation at events," which was ranked first by the Group A individuals. Ranking third was "extended conference with an Ag teacher." which reversed positions with "agricultural education teachers in college," which was ranked fourth by this group of individuals. Changes were found in the lower rankings, as the source "mass media" reversed positions with "brochures, bulletins, etc."

TABLE IX

SOURCES OF FINAL DECISION CONFIRMATION FOR CHOOSING TEACHING VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE  
AS A CAREER AS PERCEIVED BY STUDENTS (GROUP A)

Source of Final Confirmation	Very Great		Great		Some		Little		None		Average Score	Rank
	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent		
Your own experience in Vo-Ag	24	42.9	20	35.7	8	14.3	--	--	4	7.1	4.071	2
Extended conference with an Ag teacher	16	28.6	21	37.5	15	26.8	2	3.6	2	3.6	3.84	3
Observation at events (expositions, fairs, shows)	22	39.3	21	37.5	11	19.6	2	3.6	--	--	4.13	1
Brochures, bulletins, etc.	--	--	11	19.6	17	30.4	21	37.5	7	12.5	2.57	7
College teachers other than Agricultural Education	2	3.6	13	23.2	19	33.9	15	26.8	7	12.5	2.79	5
Agricultural Education teachers in college	23	41.1	20	35.7	8	14.3	4	7.1	1	1.8	4.071	2
Mass media (TV, newspapers, etc.)	--	--	9	16.1	22	39.3	18	32.1	7	12.5	2.59	6
Supervisors and officials in vocational agriculture	9	16.1	16	28.6	20	35.7	8	14.3	3	5.4	3.36	4



TABLE X

SOURCES OF FINAL DECISION CONFIRMATION FOR CHOOSING TEACHING VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE  
AS A CAREER AS PERCEIVED BY LESS EXPERIENCED TEACHERS (GROUP B)

Source of Final Confirmation	Very Great		Great		Some		Little		None		Average Score	Rank
	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent		
Your own experience in Vo-Ag	19	48.7	16	41.0	3	7.7	0	0.0	1	2.6	4.33	1
Extended conference with an Ag teacher	10	25.6	15	38.5	12	30.8	2	5.1	0	0.0	3.85	3
Observation at events (expositions, fairs, shows)	10	25.6	21	53.8	8	20.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.05	2
Brochures, bulletins, etc.	0	0.0	1	2.6	9	23.1	18	46.2	11	28.2	2.00	7
College teachers other than Agricultural Education	0	0.0	3	7.7	10	25.6	14	35.9	12	30.8	2.10	6
Agricultural Education teachers in college	3	7.7	18	46.2	10	25.6	6	15.4	2	5.1	3.36	4
Mass media (TV, newspapers, etc.)	0	0.0	1	2.6	8	20.5	18	46.2	12	30.8	1.95	8
Supervisors and officials in vocational agriculture	6	15.4	6	15.4	21	53.8	5	12.8	1	2.6	3.28	5

and received the lowest ranking, although it should be recognized that the three sources ranking the lowest had only a difference of 0.15 in their average scores.

Data obtained from responses of Group C are shown in Table XI. These individuals ranked the sources "your own experience in Vo-Ag" and "observation at events" first and second, which was also found to be the case in the previously discussed responses made by the Group B individuals. Tying for third position were "Agricultural Education teachers in college" and "supervisors and officials in vocational agriculture" with identical scores of 3.57. It should be noted that this score was very close to the score of 3.61 which was received by the second ranked source. It should also be pointed out that the source "extended conference with an Ag teacher" dropped to the fifth position after previously being ranked fourth and third by Groups A and B, respectively. Again, the three sources ranked the lowest by Group B were also found to be the lowest ranked by the Group C individuals, but the source "college teachers other than Agricultural Education" fell from sixth to eighth position, with the other two sources moving up one position from those they received by the Group B individuals.

Composite average scores and rankings of the three previously discussed groups of responses are contained in Table XII. It was found that the composite rankings were identical to the rankings received by the sources in the Group C responses. The first and second sources and the third and fourth sources are shown to have very close average scores. Also, the three sources ranking lowest had rather close average scores, with a range of only 0.08 from the sixth to the eighth ranked positions.

TABLE XI

SOURCES OF FINAL DECISION CONFIRMATION FOR CHOOSING TEACHING VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE  
AS A CAREER AS PERCEIVED BY EXPERIENCED TEACHERS (GROUP C)

Source of Final Confirmation	Very Great		Great		Some		Little		None		Average Score	Rank
	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent	No.	Per- cent		
Your own experience in Vo-Ag	17	38.6	12	27.3	9	20.5	2	4.5	4	9.1	3.82	1
Extended conference with an Ag teacher	7	15.9	15	34.1	15	34.1	2	4.5	5	11.4	3.39	5
Observation at events (expositions, fairs, shows)	4	9.1	21	47.7	18	40.9	0	0.0	1	2.3	3.61	2
Brochures, bulletins, etc.	1	2.3	1	2.3	17	38.6	18	40.9	7	15.9	2.34	6
College teachers other than Agricultural Education	1	2.3	2	4.5	13	29.5	17	38.6	11	25.0	2.20	8
Agricultural Education teachers in college	5	11.4	18	40.9	19	43.2	1	2.3	1	2.3	3.57	3(tie)
Mass media (TV, newspapers, etc.)	0	0.0	2	4.5	19	43.2	13	29.5	10	22.7	2.30	7
Supervisors and officials in vocational agriculture	8	18.2	18	40.9	13	29.5	1	2.3	4	9.1	3.57	3(tie)

TABLE XII

COMPOSITE OF AVERAGE SCORES AND RANKINGS OF SOURCES OF FINAL DECISION  
CONFIRMATION BY THE THREE RESPONDENT GROUPS

Source of Final Confirmation	Average Scores and Rank by Group							
	A		B		C		Overall	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Your own experience in Vo-Ag	4.07	2	4.33	1	3.82	1	4.07	1
Extended conference with an Ag teacher	3.84	4	3.85	3	3.39	5	3.69	3
Observation at events (expositions, fairs, shows)	4.13	1	4.05	2	3.61	2	3.93	2
Brochures, bulletins, etc.	2.57	8	2.00	7	2.34	6	2.30	7
College teachers other than Agricultural Education	2.79	6	2.10	6	2.20	8	2.36	6
Agricultural Education teachers in college	4.07	2	3.36	4	3.57	3	3.67	4
Mass media (TV, newspapers, etc.)	2.59	7	1.95	8	2.30	7	2.28	8
Supervisors and officials in vocational agriculture	3.36	5	3.28	5	3.57	3	3.40	5

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to identify and describe self-judgments, influence of selected individuals, and other characteristics which could be recognized as associated with an individual's decision to pursue the profession of teaching vocational agriculture in Oklahoma. The objectives of the study were as follow:

1. Identification of the person or persons having had the greatest influence on the individual's decision to enter the agricultural education field.
2. Establishment of self-judgments as to what aspects of the agriculture teaching profession were most appealing.
3. Self-judgments as to sources and situations most influential in achieving final confirmation of the decision to attempt an assumption of responsibilities of a vocational agriculture teacher.

#### Summary

One hundred thirty-nine individuals completed and returned questionnaires from which data was obtained for this study. Responding were 56 students, 39 less-experienced teachers, and 44 experienced teachers.

The above individuals responded as to the amount of influence which selected persons or other factors had on their decisions to choose to pursue a career in teaching vocational agriculture. The five possible responses for each factor were assigned values ranging from five to one.

Data obtained were collated and analyzed and are presented and discussed in Chapter III. Tables were constructed to facilitate comparison, evaluation, and conclusions which might be made among the three groups of respondents.

Key findings, emphasizing respondents' self-judgments and recall of the degree of influence which selected factors had on their decisions to choose the teaching of vocational agriculture as a career are summarized as follow:

1. In regard to the person or persons influential in an individual's decision to qualify to teach vocational agriculture, it was indicated that:
  - a. All three groups felt the local vocational agriculture teacher exerted the greatest amount of influence.
  - b. All three groups felt the parental influence was second only to the local vocational agriculture teacher with an overall scores of 3.53.
  - c. College instructors was the third-ranked factor by all three groups.
  - d. Fellow college students were ranked fourth by Groups A and C and fifth by Group B, with an overall ranking of fourth.
  - e. Factors having little influence and shown with the rankings assigned by the three respondent groups are the following: local farmer (5, 4, 6); other relatives (6, 8, 5); other

adults in home community (9, 7, 7); fellow high school students (8, 9, 8); and other high school teachers (7, 6, 9).

- f. The high school counselor exhibited relatively no influence at all, with the lowest score and rank of this group of factors and having an overall score of only 1.45. All three respondent groups ranked this item last, with Groups B and C assigning identical scores of 1.23 and Group A assigning a higher score of 1.89.
2. In regard to the appeal of certain job characteristics and the influence they exerted on a person's decision to qualify to teach vocational agriculture, it was indicated that:
    - a. The "opportunity to continue work with livestock" and "opportunity to work with youth" were the two most appealing job characteristics, being ranked first and second, respectively, by all three groups.
    - b. The "self-satisfaction of helping to educate students," ranking third overall, and "to achieve a broad knowledge of agriculture," ranking fourth overall, were rather appealing characteristics with close overall respective scores of 4.18 and 4.08. Groups B and C ranked the items identical to the overall rankings, with Group A ranking them in reverse order.
    - c. Characteristics having more than "some" appeal and shown with the respective rankings by Groups A, B, and C are listed as follow: "opportunity for continuing involvement in FFA" (6, 5, 7); "opportunity to advance professionally in

agriculture" (5, 6, 6); "opportunity to work with adult farmers" (7, 8, 5); "opportunity to engage in part-time farming" (8, 7, 9); "anticipated working conditions" (9, 9, 7); "anticipated prestige in the community" (10, 10, 10); and "anticipated salary" (11, 12, 11).

d. The "opportunity to move into full-time farming" was the least appealing of the characteristics, although it remained to exert "some" appeal. This item was ranked twelfth by Groups A and C, with a ranking of eleventh being assigned by Group B.

3. In regard to the source from which final confirmation of job responsibilities was obtained, it was indicated that:

a. The individual's own experience in vocational agriculture was the source exhibiting the greatest amount of influence, with Groups B and C ranking it first and Group A ranking it second.

b. "Observation at events" was the second most influential source, scoring only 0.10 below the above-mentioned source. This item was ranked first by Group A and second by the other two groups.

c. Items which exhibited "some" influence and had very close overall scores are shown below with the respective scores assigned by the three respondent groups: "extended conference with an ag teacher" (4, 3, 5); "Agricultural Education teachers in college" (2, 4, 3); and "supervisors and officials in vocational agriculture" (5, 5, 3).



d. The three lowest ranking sources, "college teachers other than Agricultural Education," "brochures, bulletins, etc.," and "mass media" were adjudged as being the least influential by individuals comprising each of the groups, with the respective overall rankings being sixth, seventh, and eighth. Corresponding ranks by the groups are as follow: first source (6, 6, 8); second source (8, 7, 6); and third source (7, 8, 7).

### Conclusions

By analyzing data obtained and presented in this study, certain conclusions can be suggested concerning factors influential in a person's decision to qualify to teach vocational agriculture. The major conclusions obtained in this study are presented as follow:

1. Local vocational agriculture teachers should be strongly encouraged to help direct students in pursuing a career of teaching vocational agriculture.
2. Parents, college instructors, and fellow college students are rather influential in a person's decision as to choosing a professional career.
3. Either high school counselors are poorly informed as to the opportunities available in the Agricultural Education field or are not readily accessible to a large proportion of individuals interested in this field of agriculture.
4. Vocational agriculture teachers in Oklahoma enjoy working with livestock.

5. The opportunity to work with youth is an appealing characteristic of teaching vocational agriculture.
6. Helping to educate students, as well as obtaining a broader knowledge of agriculture, is important to vocational agriculture teachers in Oklahoma.
7. The anticipated salary and the opportunity to move into full-time farming are not important in influencing a person to qualify to teach vocational agriculture.
8. An individual's own experience in vocational agriculture is very influential in his obtaining the job responsibilities of a vocational agriculture teacher.
9. Observations made at events such as fairs, contests, and so forth are an influential factor.
10. Agricultural Education teachers in college and vocational agriculture supervisors and officials were not as influential as was expected.
11. Mass media and brochures, bulletins, etc. need to be used more effectively in the recruitment effort.
12. All three respondent groups ranked influential factors approximately the same within each subgroup of items.

#### Recommendations

After completing this study, the author would like to recommend the following:

1. Further studies be conducted in this area at least every two years. Such studies might well include attempts to ascertain the possible effective role of other groups such as the state

- and National Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association.
2. A closer working relationship be established and maintained among local vocational agriculture teachers, supervisors and other officials in vocational agriculture, and Agricultural Education instructors in college.
  3. An improved relationship be established and maintained between high school counselors and vocational agriculture teachers.
  4. When planning recruitment efforts, stress should be put upon pointing out attractive characteristics and potential rewards of the vocational agriculture teaching job such as working with livestock and with youth as well as the self satisfaction of helping to educate students.
  5. Insure that agriculture instructors in the state's junior colleges are informed and knowledgeable regarding career opportunities available in Agricultural Education.
  6. While these items were evaluated as presently being of lesser influence, efforts should be exerted to greatly improve the quality and extent of emphasis placed upon the use of brochures, bulletins, and the mass media.

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## APPENDIX

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
 Years in College \_\_\_\_\_ Years Taught \_\_\_\_\_  
 Years Vo-Ag in High School \_\_\_\_\_ College Transferred From \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hours Transferred \_\_\_\_\_  
 Farm Reared \_\_\_\_\_ Size of Operation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Type of Operation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work Experience  
 Non-Farm \_\_\_\_\_ Parents' Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Agricultural Experience \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Years and Kind)

A SURVEY  
 FACTORS SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTING TO A DECISION TO  
 QUALIFY FOR TEACHING VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE

This study is an attempt to identify factors which may have contributed to the decision of individuals to become qualified teachers of vocational agriculture. It is prompted because of a continuing national shortage of teachers. Please help us by taking approximately 15 minutes to fill out this survey form.

1. Please designate the amount of influence the following persons had upon your final decision to become a vocational agriculture teacher:

	Very Great	Great	Some	Little	None
A. Local Vo-Ag teacher					
B. Other high school teachers					
C. Parents					
D. Other relatives					
E. Fellow students (high school)					
F. Fellow students (college)					
G. College instructors					
H. High school counselor					
I. Local farmer					
J. Other adults in home community					
Others (please list)					
K. _____					
L. _____					
M. _____					

2. To what degree did the following characteristics of the job of teaching vocational agriculture appeal to you?

	Very Great	Great	Some	Little	None
A. Anticipated salary					
B. Anticipated prestige in community					
C. Opportunity to work with youth					
D. Opportunity to work with adult farmers					
E. Opportunity to continue work with livestock					
F. To achieve a broad knowledge of agriculture					
G. Opportunity to advance professionally in agriculture					
H. Opportunity to engage in part-time farming					
I. Opportunity to move into full-time farming					
J. Self-satisfaction of helping to educate students					
K. Anticipated working conditions					
L. Opportunity for continuing involvement in FFA					

3. From what source did you obtain final confirmation of your image (job responsibilities) of a Vo-Ag teacher?

	Very Great	Great	Some	Little	None
A. Your own experience in Vo-Ag					
B. Extended conference with a ag teacher					
C. Observation at events (expositions, fairs, shows)					
D. Brochures, bulletins, etc.					
E. College teachers other than Agricultural Education					
F. Agricultural Education teachers in college					
G. Mass media (TV, newspapers, etc.)					
H. Supervisors and officials in vocational agriculture					
Others (please list)					
I. _____					
J. _____					
K. _____					

VITA

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Master of Science

Thesis: TEACHER AND COLLEGE STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF ITEMS INFLUENTIAL IN  
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