

IDENTIFICATION OF FACTORS INFLUENCING PREVIOUS
TEACHERS OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE
TO RETURN TO THE PROFESSION

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Vocational Agriculture and the Future Farmers of America have long had a tradition of highest respect. Oklahoma and the rest of the nation have enjoyed the many programs provided through this organization to its youth. In order to have a successful program in a youth organization, such as the Future Farmers of America (FFA), much effort is required on the part of many individuals. State supervisors of the organization must monitor teaching conditions, assist the teacher in their job performance, and promote many FFA activities, to name a few. Teachers need to develop a well rounded program which will provide a cross section of valuable information for the various students' interest. Administrators need to work with and assist teachers in providing needed information as well as support for the various activities. Students need to develop responsibility and respect as well as a number of useful and employable skills. The point is, many things are involved in the success of a chapter but none have as much direct influence on this success as does the teacher.

Many good vocational agriculture teachers leave the profession every year, several of which have many good years of teaching experience behind them. It is common knowledge that experience is very hard, if not impossible, to replace. Teachers in the past have left the profession for a variety of different reasons, some of which are, long

hours, lack of promotional opportunities, salary too low compared to job responsibilities and desire to spend more time with their family. However, there seems to be a reversal in this trend. Many experienced teachers are returning to the teaching profession for various reasons. Several studies have revealed why teachers decide to leave the profession. A few studies have indicated factors influencing teachers to remain in the profession. A recent study about the reasons teachers reenter the profession was not found. There is a need therefore, to identify those factors which influence teachers to return to the profession.

Statement of the Problem

The central problem dealt with in this study was the need to know why vocational agriculture teachers in Oklahoma return to the teaching field after having left it.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine and analyze factors which influence teachers of Vocational Agriculture to return to the teaching profession.

Need for the Study

The information gathered in this study should assist state supervisors of vocational education by making them more aware of those factors which influence teachers to return to the teaching profession. By knowing these factors supervisors can make adjustments that would attract other good teachers who have left the profession. It also

should assist administrators in making decisions which would keep a good teacher in the school system. Discovery of these factors should assist teachers, who are now teaching or at one time taught, in making the decisions for reentry or remaining in the field of teaching.

Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, the following assumptions were accepted:

1. That the eight year period studied was long enough to give an accurate account of the study.
2. That the use of a questionnaire, followed by a phone survey, afforded the population in this study with the best means of expressing their opinions.
3. That the population gave an accurate description of factors that influenced vocational agriculture teachers to return to the profession.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations were established for this study. First, only vocational agriculture teachers who returned to the profession during the eight year period of school years 1978-1986 were considered for this study. Secondly, only those instructors within the five supervisory districts of Oklahoma were used.

Definition of Terms

As used in this study the following terms are defined:

Vocational Agriculture Teacher -- A person who has met the

requirements for a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture Education and is eligible for certification to teach.

Vocational Agriculture - Refers to courses of instruction designed to train high school students for careers in production, agriculture and agribusiness.

Returning Teacher - Refers to vocational teachers who at one time taught, left the profession and have now returned.

Mobility - The movement of vocational agriculture instructors within and away from the teaching field.

Supervisory Districts - Geographical areas of Oklahoma designated by the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education, according to area and population.

Future Farmers of America (FFA) - FFA is an intracurricular activity organized to further the high school vocational agriculture curriculum. FFA activities encourage members to learn about agriculture, finances, leadership, citizenship, and responsibility through active participation in FFA events and programs.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of directly and indirectly related literature and research that identified a number of factors relevant to this study. Presentation of this review was divided into three major areas and a summary for clarity and organization. The major areas included in this review were (1) why teachers leave the profession, (2) why teachers remain in the profession, and (3) attitudes toward reentering vocational teaching.

No studies were found which determined why teachers return to the teaching field. Perhaps there has been little need or interest in this area in the past, however, over the past few years there seems to be a growing trend of experienced teachers returning to the profession. On the other hand, several studies have looked at the problem of teachers leaving the profession. A few studies have covered teacher retention, job satisfaction and teacher's attitudes toward reentry.

Why Teachers Leave the Profession

Due to many teachers seeking employment in related agriculture occupations and other areas of employment, several studies have been done to ascertain why teachers leave the profession. Harrison (5) found that a limited chance for promotion was the most important factor in the decision of teachers to leave vocational agriculture

teaching. The desire for work with fewer hours and more time with their families was second in importance for terminating high school teaching. Other contributing factors were salary, the teaching situation, policies and practices in administration and supervision, and the community situation. Reece's study (10) also concluded (in order of importance (1) highest, (8) lowest) that (1) salary was too low as compared to job responsibilities, (2) promotional opportunities in other agriculture areas were not as limited, (3) the increment increases of \$100 per year, as was found in the time frame of this study, for each year of experience was too low, (4) the current inflation level exceeding the raises in salary, (5) insufficient free time for family, (6) opportunities for promotion were limited in school, (7) retirement plan was inadequate, and (8) the desire for more independence.

Knight (6) conducted an Ohio study regarding teachers leaving the profession with emphasis concerning the vocational agriculture teacher shortage. He pointed out that vocational agriculture teachers have been in shortage for over a decade with little indication of subsiding. His conclusion was that the significant factor for the shortage was the high rate of experienced teachers leaving the field. Some of the reasons for leaving were (1) long range occupational goal was something different than teaching vocational agriculture, (2) students attended class who should not have been there, (3) inadequate advancement of opportunities, (4) long hours, and (5) inadequate salary.

Mattox (9) pointed out that no single factor was found to significantly influence teachers to leave the vocational agriculture teaching profession. He indicated that groups of factors led to role

stress, which in turn affected tenure in teaching agriculture. Role stress, as used in the study, was defined as the tensions, strains, demands, and pressures of the vocational agriculture teaching profession.

Froehlich and Bundy (4), researchers at Iowa State University, also tackled this problem of teacher shortage. They found that factors having the greatest influence for nonteaching graduates to teach vocational agriculture for their first employment were (1) felt best suited in this area, (2) working closely with people and (3) salary.

Graduates who left the vocational agriculture teaching profession after teaching one to five years rated the reasons as having the greatest influence: lack of advancement opportunity, salary, too many evening responsibilities, long hours, and state reports. Influencing the vocational agriculture teacher to leave the profession after having taught more than five years were: lack of advancement opportunities, salary, too many evening responsibilities, long hours, community attitude toward vocational agriculture, and little opportunity to specialize.

Thorndike (13) conducted a 1959 study of 250 classroom teachers, 126 school administrators, 82 college teachers, 172 ex-school teachers and 28 ex-college teachers, all of whom had taken a common battery of aptitude test in the Air Force in 1943. It was found that those who left public school teaching had been significantly superior to those who were still classroom teachers on test of reading comprehension, arithmetic reasoning and mathematics. Reasons for leaving teaching given by the ex-school and ex-college teachers were (1) pay was too

low, (2) the opportunity to embark upon some other good job, and (3) lack of opportunity for promotion.

It is interesting to note in this study, that less than ten percent of those who left teaching mentioned dislike for teaching as a major reason for leaving. It appeared that lack of interest for teaching was not the major reason for leaving but rather the teaching conditions itself.

Vossler and Aaser (14), vocational instructors in North Dakota, sought to determine why vocational teachers in North Dakota left the profession.

What reasons did former instructors give for leaving the profession? Of the 44 questionnaires returned in the 1957-58 study, the reasons of leaving in order of importance were (1) limited opportunity for advancement, (2) salary not commensurate with work, (3) desire for a more permanent home, and (4) too many extra curricular activities and community responsibilities.

Lockwood (8) in an article in the American Vocational Journal stated: "How many young instructors' wives have you heard say: 'I never see my husband--I'm sure glad we don't have a family yet.' It is my feelings that the high drop out rate in our profession is due largely to that problem" (p. 47).

In a study of Wisconsin teachers by Gilbert, Wilkins and Korschgen (16), the reasons given by administrators for teachers leaving education were: work opportunities outside of education (34 percent), relocation of spouse (20 percent), staying home with the family (20 percent), disciplinary understanding with employee (eight percent), job dissatisfaction (three percent), medical reasons (three

percent), and unknown and miscellaneous (12 percent).

Findings suggest that those who decided to leave the field were judged to have average or above average teaching ability. This does support to some degree the concern about academically able people leaving teaching.

Why Teachers Remain in the Profession

As mentioned earlier, there has been much research in the area of why teachers leave the profession. This section of the review of literature seeks to deal with "Why Teachers Remain in the Profession."

White (15) reported that "standard of living provided by salary level" was the most important of all monetary considerations influencing teachers to continue teaching, while "additional income from conducting young and adult farmer classes" was considered to be of "no" influence. It was further indicated that teachers regarded "appreciation for living conditions in a rural environment" as being of "great" influence and the most influential factor relevant to family and personal opportunities. Teachers also felt that it was important that their families were made to feel a part of the community and considered it to be a "great" influence on their decision to remain in the profession. Other factors cited by White (15) was that "satisfaction experienced in helping others" was considered as being a "great" influence as well as appreciation and "recognition of vocational agriculture teacher service."

Harrison (5), in an earlier Oklahoma study cited that personal freedom and the appreciation of public acclaim were considered to be

"highly important" to those teachers continuing to teach. In addition, the feeling of accomplishment and the advantages of 12-month employment were considered as important factors by teachers remaining in high school teaching.

Other important factors cited by Harrison (5) for reasons to remain in the teaching field were (1) pride in professional status, (2) teaching situation, (3) desire to stay settled in a rural life situation, and (4) salary adequate to provide a desirable standard of living.

In a study by Lambreth (7), teachers were asked to give reasons that influenced their decision to continue teaching and to rank each reason in order of importance. The study included 125 Tennessee teachers with ten or more years of teaching experience. Factors influencing teachers to continue in the profession were: 98 percent of the teachers indicated that school conditions influenced their decisions to continue teaching vocational agriculture. Most of the respondents stated they enjoyed teaching high school farm boys and being able to guide and counsel them. The enjoyment of FFA activities and continuous cooperation from student and parents were also important.

Ranking second to school conditions was the fact that most teachers were born and raised on a farm and wished to be closely associated with the farm. This was followed closely by the enjoyment of associations with other agriculture teachers.

In a study of Kansas vocational agriculture teachers by Reilly and Welton (11), the factors which rated highest by teachers planning to remain in the profession were reported. The five highest ranking factors were (1) enjoy working with rural people, (2) enjoy being

close to work associated with the farm, (3) enjoy working with young people, (4) enjoy the chance to work outdoors, and (5) enjoy working with other vocational agriculture teachers.

Attitudes Toward Reentering Vocational Teaching

Thompson (12) conducted a study in Michigan of career pattern analysis of a selected group of former vocational teachers. In the study, 91 former vocational teachers were used to determine attitude toward reentering vocational teaching. The items which comprise the attitude of the former vocational teacher toward reentry were (1) attitude toward reentry, (2) on what basis would they reenter, (3) type of position desired if they reentered, (4) in-service courses they would need if they reentered, (5) supervision received while teaching, (6) supervision wanted if they reentered, and (7) pay wanted if they reentered.

Results of the study concluded that a positive attitude toward reentering vocational education was held by 55 percent of the former vocational teachers. Thirty-three percent of the former vocational teachers indicated that they would consider reentering vocational teaching on a full-time basis, 49 percent on a part-time basis, while only 18 percent would not reenter on any basis. It was also found that former home economics and business teachers were much more willing to reenter than former agriculture teachers.

Also considered important was the fact that nearly all of the respondents would prefer a classroom position if they reentered vocational teaching. Forty-two percent of the former vocational

teachers indicated that they would need technical subject matter courses if they reentered, while 18 percent thought they would not need any type of in-service, refresher courses. About one-half of the respondents were never supervised by a vocational supervisor and the other half were supervised about two times a year. In spite of the acknowledgement of such little supervision, nearly two-thirds of all respondents would want the same amount of supervision if they reentered vocational teaching. Finally, if they reentered vocational teaching, former women vocational teachers would expect to be paid at a rate equal to present vocational teachers, and men would want pay equal to their present job.

It is interesting to note the career choices of this group of vocational teachers upon their exit from teaching. They were as follows:

1. Most home economics teachers exited to become homemakers..
2. Business teachers distributed themselves among business, sales or secretarial jobs; homemaking or nonvocational classroom teaching as they exited. According to the study, the variety of occupations that they entered was limited.
3. Most former agriculture teachers entered school administration; business, sales or secretarial work; and professional jobs. They, in general, entered a wider range of occupations than did the former home economics and business teachers.

In a similar study by Thorndike (13), ex-school teachers were asked to respond to the question "How do you feel about returning to

teaching ?" Ex-teachers responded as follows:

	<u>Ex-School Teacher</u>
Wouldn't consider it under any circumstances	23.4%
Sometimes think I might if conditions were improved.	47.5%
Would like to get back into teaching sometime	25.3%
Definitely plan to teach again	3.8% (p. 314).

Ex-teachers were also asked the question "What would be most important in getting you back into teaching?" Once again, financial considerations seemed to swamp all others. This factor was mentioned by 80 to 90 percent of the respondents. The next most frequent category was one dealing with working conditions.

Summary

This review of literature provided background information on three areas related to this study (1) why teachers leave the profession, (2) why teachers remain in the profession and (3) attitudes toward reentering vocational teaching.

Several studies have been conducted over the years to determine why teachers leave the profession. Many of the same reasons were reported in the various studies. Factors such as limited chance for promotion, salary too low compared to job responsibilities, long hours, and role stress have been determined to be primary reasons for teachers leaving the profession. It seems that little progress has been made in the correction of these areas.

Attempts to determine why vocational agriculture teachers remain in the profession have found some areas which are similar in nature. Satisfaction of helping students succeed, enjoyment of FFA activities,

opportunity to work with youth and the opportunity to help young people develop leadership were some of the areas which were commonly reported.

Based on this review of literature, it was found that some studies have been conducted on former teachers' attitudes toward reentering the profession. However no parallel studies were found on reasons former teachers returned to the profession.

Attitude studies of former teachers on reentering the profession produced results that appeared to be consistent with the drop-out rate of vocational agriculture teachers. Studies indicated that over half of the former vocational teachers had a positive attitude toward reentering. However, it was also found that former home economics and business teachers were much more willing to reenter than were former agriculture teachers.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Introduction

The primary purpose of this chapter is to describe the procedures followed in conducting this study. The design and conduct of the study were dictated by the main purpose of the study, which was to determine factors influencing previous teachers of vocational agriculture to return to the profession. In order to obtain information which would aid in the completion of the study, it was necessary to (1) establish a valid population, (2) develop a suitable instrument for data collecting, (3) secure names and addresses of population to be used, and (4) determine the method to use in analyzing collected data.

The Population

The population for this study consisted of all Oklahoma Vocational Agriculture teachers who had returned to the teaching field from July 1, 1978 to June 30, 1986. Since there was no record of information on teachers who at one time taught, quit and are now teaching, personal interviews were conducted with state supervisors and agricultural education staff to determine the population. To further varify this population, use was made of the returning teacher in-service program records kept by the Agricultural Education Department at Oklahoma State University. Directory records kept by the

Oklahoma State Department of Vocational and Technical Education were also used. A current State Department directory was used to locate addresses and telephone numbers of the population.

Development of the Instrument

In order to gather information concerning returning teachers, a closed form questionnaire was developed (Appendix A). Categories were selected to best describe the statements teachers perceived as influential in their decision to return to the profession.

In formulating the statements used on the instrument, the investigator reviewed related literature and instruments that had been used by previous investigators. In developing a questionnaire, Best (1) listed eight characteristics of a good questionnaire which should be observed in constructing such instruments as follows:

1. It deals with a significant topic, a topic the respondent will recognize as important enough to warrant spending his time in completing. The significance should be clearly and carefully stated on the questionnaire, or in the letter that accompanies it.

3. It is as short as possible, only long enough to get the essential data. Long questionnaires frequently find their way into the wastebasket.

4. It is attractive in appearance, neatly arranged, and clearly duplicated or printed.

5. Directions are clear and complete, important terms are defined, each question deals with a single idea, all questionnaire worded as simply and as clearly as possible, and the categories should provide an opportunity for easy, accurate, and unambiguous

responses.

6. The questions are objective, with no leading suggestions as to the response desired. Leading questions are just as inappropriate on a questionnaire as they are in a court of law.

7. Questions are presented in good psychological order, proceeding from general to more specific responses. This order helps the respondent to organize his own thinking so that his answers are logical and objective. It may be well to present questions that create a favorable attitude before proceeding to those that may be a bit delicate or intimate. If possible, annoying or embarrassing questions should be avoided.

8. It is easy to tabulate and interpret. It is advisable to preconstruct a tabulation sheet, anticipating how the data will be tabulated and interpreted, before the final form of the question is decided upon. This working backward from a visualization of the final analysis of data is an important step in avoiding ambiguity in questionnaire form.

A mailed questionnaire was used to collect the data for this study. The study did not involve sampling. Because of the relatively small number of returning teachers over the eight year period from July 1, 1978 to June 30, 1986, the entire population was surveyed.

An instrument was developed by adapting parts of those developed by Collins (3), White (15), and Harrison (5) for securing information on teachers. Some additions and deletions were made on these instruments so the investigator could secure certain types of relevant information. In addition to information on the instructors, four major areas were used to determine why teachers returned. These areas

were (1) monetary and security, (2) family situation, (3) teaching situation, and (4) Future Farmers of America and Adult Farmers.

Data Collection

Since there was a relatively small population used in this study, each respondent selected was mailed an instrument along with a cover letter. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was enclosed for the instructor to return the completed instrument. To extend the study and increase the population base, a second letter was mailed out and questionnaires sent on August 15, 1986 to more recent returning teachers. Because of the small size of the population, telephone call reminders were used on nonrespondents. Of the 40 returning teachers in this eight year study, 36 returned questionnaires.

Analysis of Data

The data was collected and evaluated using the frequency of responses to a four point Likert scale. The categories for responses were "extremely important", "highly important", "of some importance", and "of no importance". Data scored from the personal data of the instruments were tabulated using total responses. The total responses in each category were multiplied by the numerical value of that category. These values were totaled and then averaged to give an average score for each response. Real limits were assigned to each category of responses to facilitate comparison of these responses. The scale used to determine the mean responses of the respondents regarding the amount of influence people and factor had on their decision to return to teach as shown in Table I.

TABLE I
MEAN RESPONSE SCALE

Response Categories	Numerical Value	Range of Actual Limits for Categories
Extremely Important	4	3.5 - 4.00
Highly Important	3	2.5 - 3.49
Of Some Importance	2	1.5 - 2.49
Of No Importance	1	1.0 - 1.49

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to identify selected factors influencing previous teachers of vocational agriculture in Oklahoma to return to the profession.

Data collected for this study represented the response of 36 vocational agriculture teachers who had returned to teaching between July 1, 1978 to June 30, 1986. The purpose of this chapter is to present the data compiled from these responses and to report those facts revealed through analysis of this data.

Background of the Respondents

Findings of this study are presented according to the manner in which they apply to the specific objectives of the study. The major source of data for this study was the questionnaires completed by these 36 teachers which represented a response rate of 90 percent.

Table II summarizes the background information of the respondents in this study as provided by the teachers on the questionnaire. Included are the years teaching experience the respondent had when he/she left the teaching field, and the number of years he/she were employed in a nonvocational agriculture teaching position before

returning to teach.

Data in Table I indicates that 18 (50 percent) of the teachers had nine or more years teaching experience when they left the field. It can be observed that 25 (69 percent) were employed outside of vocational agriculture teaching, for only zero to three years before returning.

Teacher Variable

With regard to the respondents' employment situation, Table II indicates that 39 percent of the teachers were self-employed when they left teaching. Table II also includes the employment choices of the respondents. A quick examination shows the respondents entered a wide variety of occupations. It is interesting to note that the largest percentage of respondents (19 percent) entered the business field, while no respondents indicated they had pursued higher education.

With regard to the number of respondents returning per academic year, Table II indicates that the four years between 1978 and 1982, 23 (64 percent) of the former teachers returned. In the remaining four years between 1982 and 1986, only 13 (36 percent) returned. Table II also indicates that 22 (61 percent) of the respondents said that no college credit hours were required of them upon returning. Upon returning to the teaching field, 44 percent felt the new and returning teacher in-service program was beneficial, while 56 percent felt it was of no benefit to their return.

Finally, Table II indicates that 94 percent of the returning teachers indicated they felt they would remain a vocational agriculture teacher in the coming years. Only six percent stated they may again

TABLE II
DESCRIPTIVE DATA OF RETURNING VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS

Teacher Variable	N	Percent
How many years of teaching experience did you have when you left the teaching field?		
0 - 2 years	4	11.11
3 - 5 years	9	25.00
6 - 8 years	5	13.89
9 or more	18	<u>50.00</u>
		100.00
How many years were you employed in a non- Vo-Ag teaching position before returning to the Vo-Ag teaching profession?		
0 - 1 year	13	36.11
2 - 3 years	12	33.33
4 - 5 years	3	8.34
6 or more	8	<u>22.22</u>
	36	100.00
When first leaving the Vo-Ag teaching field, were you selfemployed?		
Yes	14	38.89
No	22	<u>61.11</u>
	36	100.00
What career did you pursue?		
Business	7	19.43
Farming	4	11.11
Ranching	4	11.11
Sales	4	11.11
Extension	3	8.33
College Teaching	3	8.33
Administration	2	5.56
Industry	2	5.56
Politics	1	2.78
Oil Field	1	2.78
Science Teacher	1	2.78
Banking	1	2.78
Peace Corps/Vo-Ag	1	2.78
Journalism	1	2.78
Police Department	1	2.78
Pursued Higher Education	<u>1</u>	<u>.00</u>
	36	100.00

TABLE II (continued)

Teacher Variable	N	Percent
What academic school year did you return to the teaching profession?		
1978 - 1979	6	16.67
1979 - 1980	5	13.89
1980 - 1981	6	16.67
1981 - 1982	6	16.67
1982 - 1983	4	11.11
1983 - 1984	3	8.33
1984 - 1985	3	8.33
1985 - 1986	<u>3</u>	<u>8.33</u>
	36	100.00
How many additional hours of college course work was required for teacher certificate renewal?		
0 - hours required	22	61.11
1 - 3 hours	7	19.44
4 - 6 hours	4	11.11
7 - 9 hours	2	5.56
10 or more	<u>1</u>	<u>2.78</u>
	36	100.00
Upon returning to the teaching field was the new and returning teacher in-service program beneficial?		
Yes	16	44.44
No	<u>20</u>	<u>55.56</u>
	36	100.00
Presently do you feel you will remain a Vo-Ag teacher in the coming years?		
Yes	34	94.44
No	<u>2</u>	<u>5.56</u>
	36	100.00

leave the profession.

According to data presented in Table III, 27 (75 percent) respondents said that they themselves had the most influence on their decision to return to the profession. Family was next in line with five (14 percent) respondents indicating who had the most influence on their returning to the profession.

Monetary and Security Considerations

The first area of the questionnaire completed by the returning vocational agriculture teachers of Oklahoma dealt with those factors under the major category of monetary and security considerations. Table IV provides the reader with a summary of the responses given toward each of the factors listed under this major category. The data in this summary revealed that of the six factors under consideration, two "advantages of twelve month employment" and "teaching positions provide more security in today's economy" were considered to be highly important factors. Three categories, "recent increase in salary level", "opportunity to take advantage of group purchase plan" and "paid holidays through the year", were considered of some importance. Only one "two weeks paid vacation", was considered of no importance to their decision to return.

"Advantages of twelve month employment" was the highest rating source of reasons to return in this category with a mean response of 2.69. "Two weeks paid vacation" was the lowest rating in this category with a mean response of 1.47. The overall average mean rating of this category was 2.17, the lowest of all categories.

TABLE III

RANKING BY VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHER OF THE
INDIVIDUAL WHO HAD THE MOST INFLUENCE ON
THEIR RETURNING TO THE PROFESSION

Influencing Factor	N	Percent	Ranking
Self	27	75.00	1
Family	5	13.89	2
Other Vocational Agriculture Teachers	2	5.55	3
State Supervisors	1	2.78	4
Ag Education Department	0	0	
OSU Staff or College Faculty Member	0	0	
Co-workers in the System--Other Teachers	0	0	
Friends	1	2.78	4
Other Individuals	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	
Total	36	100.00	

TABLE IV
 MEAN PERCEPTIONS OF MONETARY AND SECURITY IN THE
 CONSIDERATION TO RETURN TO THE
 TEACHING PROFESSION

Influencing Factors	N	Monetary and Security		
		Mean Response*	Response	Ranking
Advantages of 12 month employment	36	2.69	Highly Important	1
Teaching position provides more security in today's economy	36	2.61	Highly Important	2
Recent increase in salary level	36	2.39	Highly Important	3
Paid holidays through the year (Christmas, Thanksgiving, etc.)	36	2.05	Some Importance	4
Opportunity to take advantage of group purchase plans (health insurance, tax shelters and retirement benefits)	36	1.81	Some Importance	5
Two week paid vacation	36	1.47	No Importance	6
Category Overall Rating		2.17	Some Importance	

*Mean Response Based on the Following Scale: Extremely Important = 4; Highly Important = 3; Some Importance = 2; No Importance = 1

Family Considerations

Table V presents a summary of responses toward those factors listed under the major category of family. It was revealed that none of the factors which influenced previous teachers to return, due to the family situation, rated higher, based on mean responses, than "some importance." "Community recognition that teaching vocational agriculture offers" was the highest rated mean response in this category with a 2.36. "Involvement of my family in the local church" was the lowest rating in this category with a mean response of 2.06. It is interesting to know that even though this category scored no higher than of "some importance" on each response, its overall average mean rating of 2.22 is still higher than the 2.17 of monetary and security overall average mean.

Teaching Considerations

According to the data presented in Table VI, all responses but one in the "teaching situation" category scored a "highly important" mean response. It is easy to see that this category scored the highest overall mean response of all four categories with a 3.01. "Enjoyment of Future Farmer of America activities" ranked first with a mean response of 3.39. "Opportunity to work with youth" ranked second in this category of teaching situations, and the "opportunity to work with animals" ranked third. The only response to score a less than "highly important" mean response was "professional recognition that teaching vocational agriculture offers", which scored a 2.47.

TABLE V

MEAN PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY SITUATION IN THE CONSIDERATION
TO RETURN TO THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Influencing Factors	Family Situation			
	N	Mean Response*	Response	Ranking
Community recognition that teaching vocational agriculture offers	36	2.36	Some Importance	1
Close family ties to friends in the community	36	2.30	Some Importance	2
Opportunity for family to feel part of the community	36	2.14	Some Importance	3
Involvement of my family in the local church	36	2.06	Some Importance	4
Category Overall Rating		2.22	Some Importance	

*Mean Response Based on the Following Scale: Extremely Important = 4; Highly Important = 3; Some Importance = 2; No Importance = 1

TABLE VI
 MEAN PERCEPTIONS OF THE TEACHING SITUATION IN THE CONSIDERATION
 TO RETURN TO THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Influencing Factors	N	Teaching Situation		
		Mean Response*	Response	Ranking
Enjoyment of Future Farmer of America activities	36	3.39	Highly Important	1
Opportunity to work with youth	36	3.36	Highly Important	2
Opportunity to work with animals	36	3.31	Highly Important	3
Enjoyment of fellowship of other Vo-Ag teachers	36	3.22	Highly Important	4
Opportunity to develop your own program	36	3.17	Highly Important	5
Enjoyment of teaching a variety of subject matter	36	3.17	Highly Important	5
"Air" of trust and respect carried by teaching vocational agriculture	36	3.11	Highly Important	6
Appreciation for working conditions in a rural environment	36	3.00	Highly Important	7
Opportunity to work with fairs and shows	36	2.69	Highly Important	8
Vocational Agriculture teaching situation constantly improving	36	2.64	Highly Important	9
Opportunity for professional improvement	36	2.61	Highly Important	10
Professional recognition that teaching Vocational Agriculture offers	36	2.47	Some Importance	11
Category Overall Rating		3.01	Highly Important	

*Mean Response Based on the Following Scale: Extremely Important = 4; Highly Important = 3; Some Importance = 2; No Importance = 1

Future Farmers of America and Adult Farmer Considerations

A review of the summary of responses presented in Table VII reveals the influence that the six factors listed under the major category of FFA and Adult Farmer had on the respondent to return to the teaching profession. As a result of this summary, it was revealed that four of the six factors in the category had mean responses which were rated as being "highly important." "Satisfaction of helping students succeed" was rated the number one choice by returning teachers in this category with a mean response of 3.47. The lowest mean response of the six factors was associated with "additional income from conducting young and adult farmer classes" which had a mean response of 1.56.

Priorities Which Influenced Return

Table VII summarizes those priorities which had the single most influence on their decision to return to the teaching profession. The number one reason with nine (25 percent) respondents was the "opportunity to work with youth." It is interesting to note that the number two reason for the former teacher to return was "dissatisfaction with last job" with eight (22 percent) respondents. Tying for the third place reason with six (17 percent) respondents was "salary and benefits of vocational agriculture" and "family considerations."

TABLE VII

MEAN PERCEPTIONS OF FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA AND ADULT FARMERS
IN CONSIDERATION OF RETURNING TO THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Influencing Factors	Future Farmers of America & Adult Farmers			
	N	Mean Response*	Response	Ranking
Satisfaction of helping students succeed	36	3.47	Highly Important	1
Opportunity to help young people develop leadership	36	3.33	Highly Important	2
Opportunity to help young people with problems of life	36	3.03	Highly Important	3
Satisfaction of providing educational opportunities for young farmers	36	2.72	Highly Important	4
Opportunity to coach judging teams	36	2.47	Some Importance	5
Additional income from conducting Young and Adult Farmer classes	36	1.56	Some Importance	6
Category Overall Rating		2.76	Highly Important	

*Mean Response Based on the Following Scale: Extremely Important = 4; Highly Important = 3; Some Importance = 2; No Importance = 1

TABLE VIII

RANKING BY VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHER OF THE PRIORITIES
WHICH INFLUENCED THEIR RETURN TO THE PROFESSION

Influencing Factor	N	Percent	Ranking
If you had to pinpoint one factor which had the greatest influence on your decision to return, what would it be?			
Opportunity to Work with Youth	9	25.00	1
Dissatisfaction with Last Job	8	22.22	2
Family Considerations	6	16.66	3
Salary and Benefits of Vocational Agriculture	6	16.66	3
Professionalism of Vocational Agriculture Teaching	2	5.56	4
Needed a Job	1	2.78	5
Decline in Ag-product Profits	1	2.78	5
Freedom to Pursue a Business	1	2.78	5
Provide a Chance to Stay in the Community and Continue to Farm	1	2.78	5
The Love of Vocational Agriculture and the FFA	1	2.78	5
Enjoyment of FFA Activities	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	0
Total	36	100.00	

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present a summary of the major findings of this study, along with conclusions and recommendations based on these findings.

The study was limited to agriculture teachers in Oklahoma who at one time taught vocational agriculture, quit and returned between July 1, 1978 and June 30, 1986.

Summary of Findings

1. "Satisfaction of helping students succeed" was the highest rated of all influencing factors returning teachers chose for their reason to return.

2. When asked to pinpoint the one factor which had the greatest influence on their decision to return, "opportunity to work with youth" and "dissatisfaction with last job" were the two most often chosen.

3. The general category of "teaching situation" appeared to have the most influence on returning teachers' decisions to return. "Enjoyment of FFA activities" was the highest rated single response in this category.

4. "FFA and adult farmer" was the second highest rated general category for returning teachers. "Satisfaction of helping students succeed" was the highest rated single response.

5. "Family situation" was third in line of major categories, with "community recognition that teaching vocational agriculture offers" being the number one response.

6. "Monetary and security" were of the least concern of all major categories. "Two weeks paid vacation" and "the opportunity to take advantage of health insurance, tax shelters and retirement benefits" were the two lowest rated single responses.

7. "Additional income from conducting young and adult farmer classes" and "two weeks paid vacation" were the two lowest rated factors on the entire survey.

8. When asked who had the greatest influence on the decision to return, 75 percent of the teachers indicated "self."

9. Upon leaving the teaching profession, teachers chose a wide variety of occupations. Business was the most frequent with 19 percent.

10. When first leaving the teaching field, 39 percent were self-employed.

11. With regard to the academic year teachers returned, the largest group, 64 percent returned in the four year period between 1978 to 1982.

12. Within the first three years after having left, 69 percent of the returning teachers returned to the profession.

13. Upon returning to teaching, college credit hours were required by 39 percent of the respondents in order to renew their teaching certificate.

14. The new and returning teachers' in-service program was said to be beneficial to 44 percent of all of the respondents. The

percentage of returning teachers who were required to take the in-service class is unknown.

15. A large number of returning teachers (94 percent) indicated they would remain a vocational agriculture teacher in the coming years.

Table IX is a summary of "highly important" mean responses of factors which influenced previous teachers of vocational agriculture to return to the profession. The data on Table IX reveals that of the 28 factors included on the questionnaire, 17 were considered to be "highly important". The highest rated mean response of all categories was "satisfaction of helping students succeed" with a mean response of 3.47. "Enjoyment of Future Farmer of America activities" was second with a mean response of 3.39. The "opportunity to work with youth" was third with a mean response of 3.36. The "opportunity for professional improvement" and "teaching provides more security in today's economy" tied for last place with a mean response of 2.61.

Table X presents an average mean ranking of influencing factors by categories. Each categories mean responses were averaged to obtain an overall ranking by category. It is interesting to see how each category ranked in order of influence. According to the table, the responses which fell in the teaching situation category were of highest influence on the respondents with an overall rating of 3.01. The remaining three categories in order of rank were: "FFA and adult farmers", 2.76; "family situation", 2.22; and "monetary and security", 2.17. It is interesting to note that "teaching situation" and "FFA and adult farmers" were considered "highly important" while "family situation" and "monetary and security" were considered only of "some importance."

TABLE IX

SUMMARY OF "HIGHLY IMPORTANT" MEAN RESPONSES OF FACTORS WHICH
INFLUENCED PREVIOUS TEACHERS OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE
TO RETURN TO THE PROFESSION

Factor	Mean Responses
1. Satisfaction of Helping Students Succeed	3.47
2. Enjoyment of Future Farmer of America Activities	3.39
3. Opportunity to Work with Youth	3.36
4. Opportunity to Help Young People Develop Leadership	3.33
5. Opportunity to Work with Animals	3.31
6. Enjoyment of Fellowship of Other Vocational Agriculture Teachers	3.22
7. Enjoyment of Teaching a Variety of Subject Matter	3.17
8. Opportunity to Develop Your Own Program	3.17
9. "Air" of Trust and Respect Carried by Teaching Vocational Agriculture	3.11
10. Opportunity to Help Young People with Problems of Life	3.03
11. Appreciation for Working Conditions in a Rural Environment	3.00
12. Satisfaction of providing Educational Opportunities for Young Farmers	2.72
13. Opportunity to Work with Fairs and Shows	2.69
14. Advantages of 12 Month Employment	2.69
15. Vocational Agriculture Teaching Situation Constantly Improving	2.64
16. Opportunity for Professional Improvement	2.61
17. Teaching Position Provides More Security in Today's Economy	2.61

TABLE X
AVERAGE MEAN RANKING OF INFLUENCING FACTORS
BY CATEGORIES

	Overall Rating Mean Response	Response	Ranking
Teaching Situation	3.01	Highly Important	1
Future Farmers of America and Adult Farmers	2.76	Highly Important	2
Family Situation	2.22	Some Importance	3
Monetary and Security	2.17	Some Importance	4

Conclusions

1. It appears that the highest rated factors influencing teachers to return to teaching, center around the student (satisfaction of helping students succeed, opportunity to work with youth, etc.).

2. It also appears that certain characteristics of the vocational agriculture environment (the teacher-to-student relationship, the teacher-to-school relationship--via wages, the teacher-to-teacher relationship and the teacher-to-family relationship) are what draw returning teachers back into teaching.

A. The vocational agriculture working environment appears to be responsible for drawing returning teachers back into vocational agriculture. This conclusion is based on the fact that the largest number of returning teachers said that they were attracted back into the classroom by "the opportunity to work with youth," while those making the third most frequent response said that they were attracted by the "salary" or wage scale and those making the fifth most frequent response cited the "professionalism" of the vocational agriculture community of instructors.

B. The vocational agriculture working environment also seems to have a positive effect on their out-of-classroom lives. This is based on the fact that the fourth most frequent response given for returning to the vocational agriculture classroom cited "family considerations"--implying that work in the vocational agriculture environment was somehow "rewarding" for the returning teachers, their wives and their children.

C. Only one of the reasons that attracts teachers back into

the vocational agriculture classroom comes from an "outside" source. Approximately 25 percent of the returning teachers cite "dissatisfaction with their last job," as the major stimulus for their return. (Of course this may only be a backhanded way of praising the desirable characteristics of the vocational agriculture working environment.)

3. Many of the factors which did rate low on the scale of sources influencing teachers to return, appear to deal with an environment outside of the teachers' "normal" realm of duties. This is based on the lowest three responses given; two weeks paid vacation, additional income from conducting young and adult farmer classes and the opportunity to take advantage of health insurance, tax shelters and retirement benefits.

4. It appears the desire to return to teaching comes from within, and no one person or group of individuals had a significant impact on this decision. This is based on the fact that, when asked who had the greatest influence on the decision to return, 75 percent of the teachers answered "self."

5. It appears upon leaving vocational agriculture, returning teachers chose the business field more often than any other area. This is based on the fact that approximately 19 percent chose business, where farming, ranching and sales all tied for second with 11 percent each. This may reflect a depressed agriculture economy which existed at the time this study was conducted, hence the more obvious occupations you might expect a vocational agriculture teacher to enter (farming, ranching, and sales) ran second.

6. With business, farming, ranching, and sales consisting of approximately 53 percent of the total occupational choices made by

returning teachers, it is easy to see where a large number (39 percent) chose self employment upon leaving the classroom.

7. It appears the decision to return to the classroom is made relatively soon after leaving. Approximately 69 percent of the returning teachers were employed in a nonvocational agriculture teaching position for only one to three years before returning.

8. Only 39 percent of the respondents said that college credit hours were required upon returning. This may be true because most of the returning teachers were only out from one to three years, therefore were not required additional hours of college course work.

9. Even though only 44 percent of the respondents said that the new and returning teacher in-service program was beneficial, this could be interpreted as a significant number because not all respondents were required to participate in this program, therefore not all respondents were qualified to answer this question.

10. It appears that once a person has taught vocational agriculture, leaves and then returns, he or she will more than likely remain a vocational agriculture teacher in the coming years. This statement is based upon the fact that 94 percent of the returning teachers indicated they would remain a vocational agriculture teacher in the coming years.

Recommendations

As a result of the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the data and major findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. That characteristics of the vocational agriculture teachers'

working environment which appear to draw returning teachers back to the classroom be strengthened by State Department staff, Agriculture Education staff and school administrators. This would better retain current teachers and encourage the return of departed teachers.

2. Action be taken by the previously mentioned groups to determine why selected factors in this study rated low on the scale of sources which influenced the decision of teachers to return to the profession.

3. That this study be shared with departing instructors to increase their return rate, or change their decision to depart.

4. That an additional study be made of those teachers who left and did not return to compare the characteristics of the returned teachers to those who chose to remain in another occupation.

5. That similar research be conducted on this study in the future. Results found in this and future studies could play an important role in retaining good teachers in the future.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

REASONS FORMER VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS RETURNED TO THE PROFESSION IN
OKLAHOMA

INSTRUCTIONS:

Of each of the categories below, please indicate by circling a number to the response you feel best describes the importance the statement had on your decision to return to the teaching field. For example: If you feel that one of the statements below had a very important factor in your decision to return, you would circle 4. If you feel that one of the statements below had no importance on your decision to return, you would circle the 1. Please answer all the questions.

How important were the following on your decision to return to the teaching field?

	EXTREMELY IMPORT.	HIGHLY IMPORT.	SOME IMPORT.	NO IMPORT.
MONETARY AND SECURITY *****				
1. Recent increase in salary level	4	3	2	1
2. Teaching position provides more security in today's economy	4	3	2	1
3. Two weeks paid vacation	4	3	2	1
4. Opportunity to take advantage of group purchase plans (Health Ins., Tax Shelters, and Retire. Ben.)	4	3	2	1
5. Paid holidays through the year (Christmas, Thanksgiving, etc.)	4	3	2	1
6. Advantages of 12 month employment	4	3	2	1
FAMILY SITUATION *****				
7. Close family ties to friends and relatives in the community	4	3	2	1
8. Community recognition that teaching Vocational Agriculture offers	4	3	2	1
9. Opportunity for family to feel part of the community	4	3	2	1
10. Involvement of my family in the local church	4	3	2	1
TEACHING SITUATION *****				
11. Opportunity to work with youth	4	3	2	1

TEACHING SITUATION (cont.) *****	EXTREMELY IMPORT.	HIGHLY IMPORT.	SOME IMPORT.	NO IMPORT.
12. Enjoyment of teaching a variety of subject matter	4	3	2	1
13. Enjoyment of fellowship of other Vo-Ag teachers	4	3	2	1
14. Enjoyment of Future Farmers of America activities	4	3	2	1
15. "Air" of trust and respect carried by teaching Vo-Ag	4	3	2	1
16. Opportunities for professional improvement	4	3	2	1
17. Opportunities to work with animals	4	3	2	1
18. Opportunity to develop your own program	4	3	2	1
19. Vocational Agriculture teaching situation constantly improving	4	3	2	1
20. Appreciation for working conditions in a rural environment	4	3	2	1
21. Professional recognition that teaching Vocational Agriculture offers	4	3	2	1
22. Opportunity to work with fairs and shows	4	3	2	1
FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA AND ADULT FARMERS *****				
23. Satisfaction of helping students succeed	4	3	2	1
24. Satisfaction of providing educational opportunities for young farmers	4	3	2	1
25. Opportunities to help young people with problems of "life"	4	3	2	1
26. Additional income from conducting Young and Adult Farmer classes	4	3	2	1
27. Opportunity to coach judging teams	4	3	2	1
28. Opportunity to help young people develop leadership	4	3	2	1

INSTRUCTIONS:

Of the following, please mark (X) only one answer per question.

29. If you had to pinpoint one factor that has had the greatest influence on your decision to return to the teaching profession, what would it be?
Mark one (X)

1. _____ Salary and Benefits of Vocational Agriculture teaching
2. _____ Family considerations
3. _____ Opportunity to work with youth
4. _____ Dis-satisfaction with last job
5. _____ Enjoyment of Future Farmers of America activities
6. _____ Professionalism of Vocational Agriculture teaching
7. _____ Needed a job
8. _____ Other considerations. Please List _____

30. In your opinion, who had the most influence on your decision to return to the teaching field? Mark one (X)

1. _____ Self
2. _____ Family
3. _____ Other Vocational Agriculture teachers
4. _____ Supervisors-State or District
5. _____ Agriculture education Department
6. _____ OSU Staff or college faculty member
7. _____ Co-Workers in the system-other teachers
8. _____ Friends
9. _____ Other individuals _____

31. When first leaving the Vocational Agriculture teaching field, were you self-employed? Mark one (X)

1. _____ Yes
2. _____ No

32. When first leaving the Vocational Agriculture teaching field, what career did you pursue? Mark one (X)

1. _____ Business
2. _____ Farming
3. _____ Ranching
4. _____ Sales
5. _____ Administration
6. _____ Politics
7. _____ Pursued higher education
8. _____ Industry
9. _____ Other _____

33. How many years of teaching experience did you have when you left the teaching field? Mark one (X)

1. _____ 0-2 years
2. _____ 3-5 years
3. _____ 6-8 years
4. _____ 9 or more

34. How many years were you employed in a non Vo-Ag teaching position before you decided to return to the Vocational Agriculture teaching profession? Mark one(X)

1. _____ 0-1 year
2. _____ 2-3 years
3. _____ 4-5 years
4. _____ 6 or more

35. What academic school year did you return to the teaching field? Mark one(X)

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. _____ 1978-1979 | 7. _____ 1984-1985 |
| 2. _____ 1979-1980 | 8. _____ 1985-1986 |
| 3. _____ 1980-1981 | 9. _____ 1986-1987 |
| 4. _____ 1981-1982 | 10. _____ Other, Please list |
| 5. _____ 1982-1983 | |
| 6. _____ 1983-1984 | |

36. How many additional hours of college course work was required in order for you to have your certificate renewed? Mark one (X)

1. _____ No hours required
2. _____ 1-3 hours
3. _____ 4-6 hours
4. _____ 7-9 hours
5. _____ 10 or more

37. Upon your return to teaching, was the New and Returning Teacher In-Service Program beneficial? Mark one (X)

1. _____ Yes
2. _____ No

38. Presently do you feel you will probably want to remain a Vo-Ag teacher in the coming years? Mark one (X)

1. _____ Yes
2. _____ No

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER

Aug. 15, 1986

Dear Fellow Teachers,

This questionnaire is part of a study to determine why Vocational Agriculture teachers return to the teaching profession. The retention and recruiting of good and successful teachers in the profession has been a great concern for the past few years.

You have been identified by the State Department as a returning teacher. The information that you provide in this survey is very important because you are a member of a small population. Your assistance in this study provides a positive approach in identifying reasons teachers, such as yourself, return to the profession.

Your input will be useful to State Supervisors by making them more aware of those factors which influence teachers to return to the teaching profession. It also should assist administrators in making those decisions which would keep a good teacher in the school system, as well as assist other fellow teachers in their decision to either reenter or remain in the teaching field.

Please complete the questionnaire and return it as soon as possible. A self-addressed envelope is furnished for your convenience.

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to contribute your opinion and feelings.

Sincerely,

Curtis G. Shumaker
Yale FFA Advisor
Rt. 2 Box 72
Yale, Okla. 74085

July 12, 1983

Dear Fellow Teacher,

This questionnaire is part of a study to determine why Vocational Agriculture teachers return to the teaching profession. The retention and recruiting of good and successful teachers in the profession has been a great concern for the past few years.

You have been identified by the State Department as a returning teacher. The information that you provide in this survey is very important because you are a member of a small population. Your assistance in this study provides a positive approach in identifying reasons teachers, such as yourself, return to the profession.

Your input will be useful to State Supervisors by making them more aware of those factors which influence teachers to return to the teaching profession. It also should assist administrators in making those decisions which would keep a good teacher in the school system, as well as assist other fellow teachers in their decision to either reenter or remain in the teaching field.

Please complete the questionnaire and return it as soon as possible. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is furnished for your convenience.

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to contribute your opinions and feelings. Enclosed is a quarter to buy yourself a cup of coffee. Thanks again.

Sincerely,

Curtis G. Shumaker
Yale FFA Advisor
Rt. 1 Box 79A
Yale, Okla. 74085

2
VITA

Curtis G. Shumaker

Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Science

Thesis: IDENTIFICATION OF FACTORS INFLUENCING PREVIOUS TEACHERS OF
VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TO RETURN TO THE PROFESSION

Major Field: Agricultural Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Monett, Missouri, December 21, 1957, the
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Education: Graduated from Fairland High School, Fairland,
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the Master of Science in Agriculture Education from Oklahoma
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Professional Experience: U. S. Army Reserve, 1978-1984; teacher
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Association; National Vocational Agriculture Teachers'
Association; Alpha Tau Alpha; Collegiate FFA; Iota Lambda
Sigma.