

A COMPARISON OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION
ENROLLEES IN OKLAHOMA BASED UPON
POINT OF ENROLLMENT AND TENURE
IN THE PROGRAM

By

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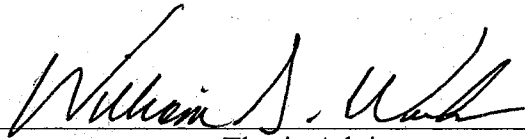
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Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
In partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
July, 1999

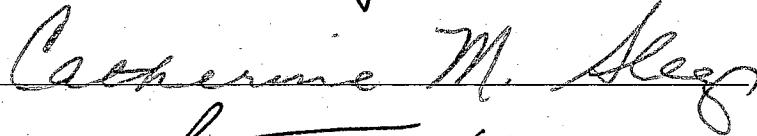
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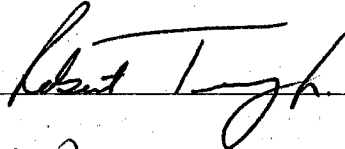
Thesis Approved:

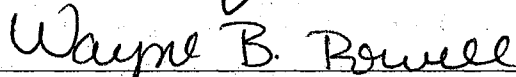


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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to those serving on my committee. Without their support, feedback, humor, and expertise, this project would not have been as enjoyable as it turned out to be. Special thanks go to my thesis chair, Dr. Bill Weeks, for his dedication in helping this project become a worthwhile and exciting endeavor. I would also like to thank the Department of Agricultural Education, Communications, and 4-H Youth Development for support during the past two years.

Moreover, I would like to thank Dr. Eddie Smith at the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education along with his assistant, Lou Ann, for their efforts in initially contacting teachers to participate in this study. Additionally, I would like to thank teachers and students who participated in this study for their cooperation.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, especially my mother, Beverly, and future husband, Steve, for listening with interest when they had no clue what I was talking about and providing moral support throughout the duration of this project.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Historically, Agricultural Education has existed in the United States since the pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock. Those native to the land demonstrated skills to newcomers so that food was plentiful. Formal Agricultural Education at the elementary school level began in the early 1900s as nature-study groups were used to teach students about the land (Moore & Borne, 1986). Eventually, these agricultural courses were moved to the secondary level as young men learned how to grow crops and care for animals in preparation for life as a farmer. This instruction was formalized through the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917.

With the Smith-Hughes Act, not only did program quality improve with federal funding, but all students were also required to maintain a “home project” where classroom learning could be applied in a realistic setting (Stimson, 1942). As a result of a changing society with a declining population involved in production agriculture, the Vocational Act of 1963 further expanded Agricultural Education to include “off-farm” agriculture (National Research Council, 1988). Enrollment in Agricultural Education courses peaked during the middle 1970s, declined in the 1980s, and now has experienced a resurgence (National FFA Organization, 1998).

While expanded course offerings in areas like Horticulture and Natural Resources have increased enrollments in the 1990s, student organization membership in the FFA

has continued to decrease (National FFA Organization, 1998). Likewise, “home projects” or supervised agricultural experiences continue to decrease. A recent study by the National FFA Organization estimated that roughly half of students enrolled in Agricultural Education courses maintain an SAE or claim membership in the FFA (National FFA Organization, 1999). Figure 1 depicts the upward trends in enrollment with decreases in FFA membership.

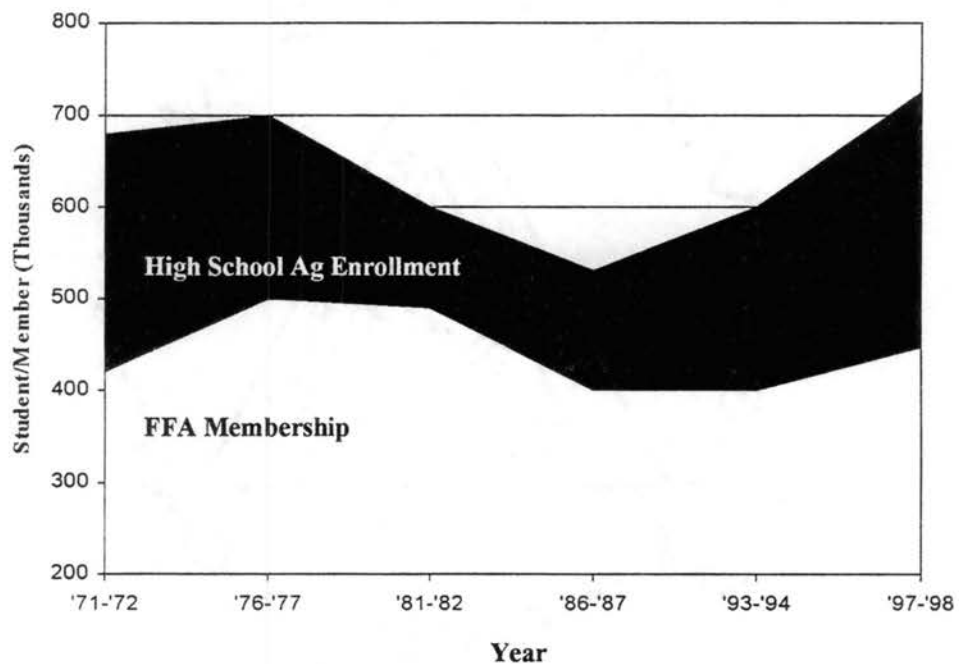


Figure 1.

Trends in Agricultural Education enrollment and FFA membership.

Secondary Agricultural Education programs in the United States were originally directed to educate young men who aspired to be farmers. Students entered as freshmen and completed Vocational Agriculture I-IV where they were exposed to the gamut of farming principles, techniques, and related skills. Today, Agricultural Education courses

are designed for young women and men who aspire to the broad career areas found in agriculture (National Research Council, 1988).

With current course offerings varying from Animal Science to Floral Design, the Agricultural Education enrollees come with new perspectives (Hoover & Scanlon, 1991). No longer are students entering as freshmen to complete four years of agricultural training as they were in the past (Marshall, Herring, & Briers, 1992). Now they may enter as juniors or seniors for specific courses that match their interests. With this flexibility, comes new obstacles for Agricultural Education as teachers struggle to reach new groups of students who come to their programs with vastly different expectations (Marshall, Herring, & Briers, 1992).

Expanded course offerings increased the enrollment in Agricultural Education by 29% over a one year period in Texas (Marshall, Herring, and Briers, 1992). At the same time, FFA membership increased by only 13%. These changes occurred while some states maintained enrollment and membership numbers. Larger schools with multiple teacher Agricultural Education departments have been able to offer a larger variety of courses, drawing less traditional students into programs (Sharber, 1979).

In several states, course enrollment numbers have increased while FFA membership has decreased, especially over the last five years (National FFA Organization, 1998). The suspected cause for this inequality is the influx of more non-traditional members into Agricultural Education programs. Such students may enroll for specific courses, but never learn or gain the benefits of FFA or SAE activities. The results of this study may help answer questions related to a low correlation between enrollment, FFA membership and Supervised Agricultural Experiences.

Statement of the Problem

Does point of entry affect reasons for enrolling and participation in the program?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe characteristics of traditional and non-traditional Agricultural Education enrollees and the degree to which these groups participate.

Objectives of the Study

To accomplish this purpose, the following objectives were developed:

1. Describe selected characteristics of traditional and non-traditional enrollees in Agricultural Education courses.
2. Describe reasons traditional and non-traditional students enroll in Agricultural Education courses.
3. Describe traditional and non-traditional enrollees' participation in the Agricultural Education program.
4. Compare selected characteristics of traditional and non-traditional Agricultural Education enrollees.

Limitations

The author recognized the following limitations:

1. The results of the study are entirely dependent upon the respondents in the sample.
2. This investigation was limited to the schools selected to participate in the study.
3. Data was self-reported by students enrolled in the selected programs.

Definition of Terms

Non-traditional enrollee - juniors and/or seniors who enroll in an Agricultural Education course for the first time as a junior or senior.

Traditional enrollee - juniors and/or seniors who have previously enrolled in one or more Agricultural Education courses.

Program participation areas - the application components of an Agricultural Education program: FFA and SAE.

FFA - the national organization for students enrolled in Agricultural Education departments.

SAE - supervised agricultural experience, the experiential learning portion of Agricultural Education which applies the concepts and principles learned in the classroom.

Multiple Teacher Department - a department of Agricultural Education having two or more teachers teaching in the same high school.

Agricultural Education Program - includes the student organization (FFA), experiential learning (SAE), and classroom and laboratory instruction in agriculture.

Scope

The scope of this study included junior and senior students enrolled in an Agricultural Education course from selected Agricultural Education Departments in Oklahoma. Departments were selected based on available demographics on number of teachers and courses taught. The profile included schools with a two-teacher department with a non-traditional area (Horticulture or Natural Resources) being taught.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to present a collection of information which was relevant to this investigation. Involved in this review were research studies, books, and periodicals. For a meaningful review, the literature is broken down into the following headings:

1. Agricultural Education programs
2. Motivation for enrolling and becoming involved
3. Traditional and non-traditional Agricultural Education enrollees
4. Agricultural Education programs with multiple teachers
5. Summary

Agricultural Education Programs

The teaching of agriculture in schools began in the early 1900s as a means to teach children nature study. The natural progression of these teachings required that agricultural topics be taught at the high school level in order to prepare students to grow crops and husband animals. In this respect, agriculture was being taught in schools before legislation mandated it (Moore, 1987). Many believe the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 was the start of Agricultural Education in the United States.

However, in the 1914-1915 school year, agriculture was taught in almost 4,400 secondary schools to more than 85,000 students (Moore & Borne, 1986). Prior to 1917, agriculture was taught in every state in the Union. However, it should be noted that there was much variation in the quality of programs. The Smith-Hughes Act brought uniformity and the expansion of agriculture education across the nation (Moore, 1987).

As part of the Smith-Hughes Act, instruction and supervised practice were deemed integral to success. The home project was deemed a most valuable part of the overall program as a means of providing supervised practice (Herren, 1986). What is now referred to as a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) had its roots in Rufus Stimson's project method whereby students maintained projects directly related to classroom instruction. He believed learning required active participation in productive farming operations of real economic or commercial importance (Stimson, 1942).

Similarly, agricultural youth organizations developed over time into the Future Farmers of America (FFA) in 1928. Beginning with Agricola Clubs in 1915 and later with the National Congress of Vocational Agriculture Students in 1926, agriculture students were provided opportunities to participate in judging contests and develop leadership skills (Malpiedi, 1987). What originally began as a youth organization for young boys aspiring to become farmers later became a diverse organization of young men and women who aspired to broad careers areas in a dynamic agricultural industry. In 1988, the name of the organization was changed to reflect this diversity as it changed from the Future Farmers of America to the National FFA Organization (Hoover & Scanlon, 1991).

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 also impacted the growth of Agricultural Education in public schools. With this Act, agricultural topics were expanded to include off-farm type occupations (National Research Council, 1988). This created additional opportunities for Agricultural Education Programs to teach topics such as horticulture and natural resources rather than limiting courses to the preparation of young farmers. Increased enrollment in courses resulted, with peak enrollment occurring in the mid-1970s.

The national report, Understanding Agriculture: New Directions for Education (National Research Council, 1988) continues to guide the future of Agricultural Education today. By determining that education in and about agriculture was important to the future of the agricultural industry, agricultural literacy efforts began through schools and state governments. Additionally, recommendations included expanding the FFA to reflect more diverse populations of students, broadening agricultural emphasis from the terms “farming” and “farmer”, and expanding Supervised Agricultural Experiences to include projects unrelated to production enterprises.

Understanding Agriculture: New Directions for Education (National Research Council, 1988) also confirmed the presence of program participation areas in Agricultural Education. This revealed what those closest to Agricultural Education already knew--- that classroom instruction alone was not what made Agricultural Education different from most vocational classes. What made Agricultural Education unique were the two program participation areas: supervised agricultural experience program (SAE) and the student organization, the National FFA Organization (FFA).

Figure 2 depicts the latest model for Agricultural Education (National FFA Organization, 1992). Classroom and laboratory instruction in and about agriculture is reinforced through application of skills and competencies learned in the classroom through SAE, FFA activities, and improvement projects. Incentives for increased participation occur through contests, awards and degrees. These applied skills lead to employment or additional education for the student who ultimately prepares for a career. All areas are applied within the context of the school and community.

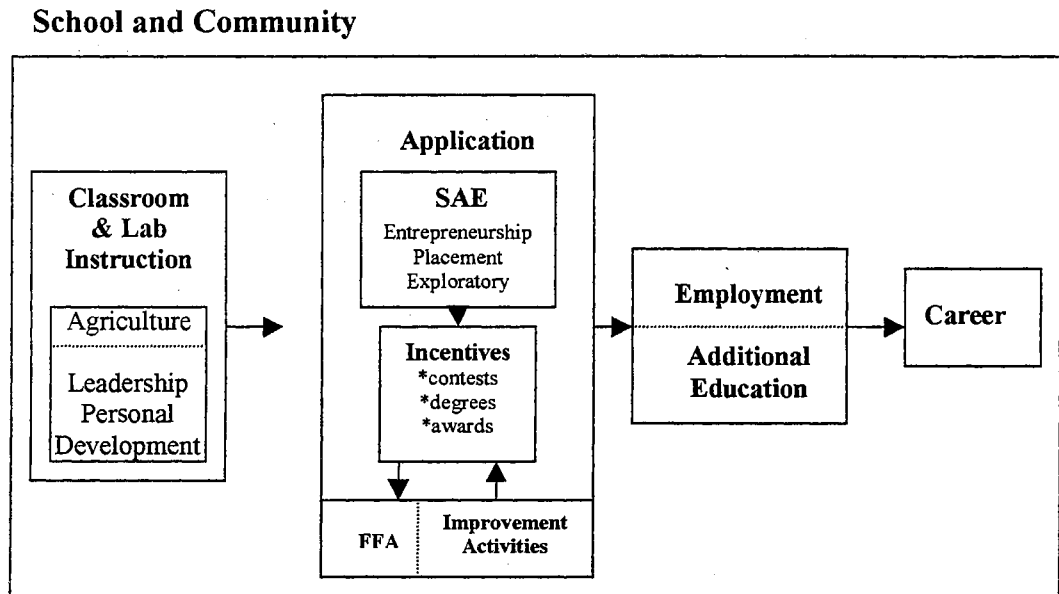


Figure 2.

The Agricultural Education model.

SAE

Moore explained the SAE concept as a way to help students gain experience rather than only learning theory (National FFA Organization, 1999). Phillips & Osborne (1988) described the supervised experience in agriculture as consisting of:

“Practical agricultural activities of educational value conducted by students outside of class and laboratory instruction or on school-released time for which systematic instruction and supervision are provided by their teachers, parents, employers, or others” (p. 313).

According to Cockrum (1979), the strength of education through SAE programs was a prominent factor in student’s selection of career goals. Because agriculture encountered significant changes in past years, SAEs have also changed to accommodate those from diverse backgrounds and varying interests (Ramsey, 1989).

McClain (1983) believed the purpose of SAE was to provide hands-on experiences related to occupational objectives. To fulfill the occupational and experiential needs of students, several types of SAEs are available and outlined in the National FFA Organization Manual each year (Cheek, 1994). Currently, three types of SAEs are available: entrepreneur, placement, and exploratory. These allow students to own projects or businesses, work in agri-business, or explore various areas of interest.

The most recent model for SAEs attempted to accommodate diverse student interests along with a changing agricultural industry (Figure 3). With these three areas now possible, entrepreneurship, exploratory, or placement, students and teachers may have the flexibility to develop SAEs to meet individual interests and career goals (National FFA Organization, 1992).

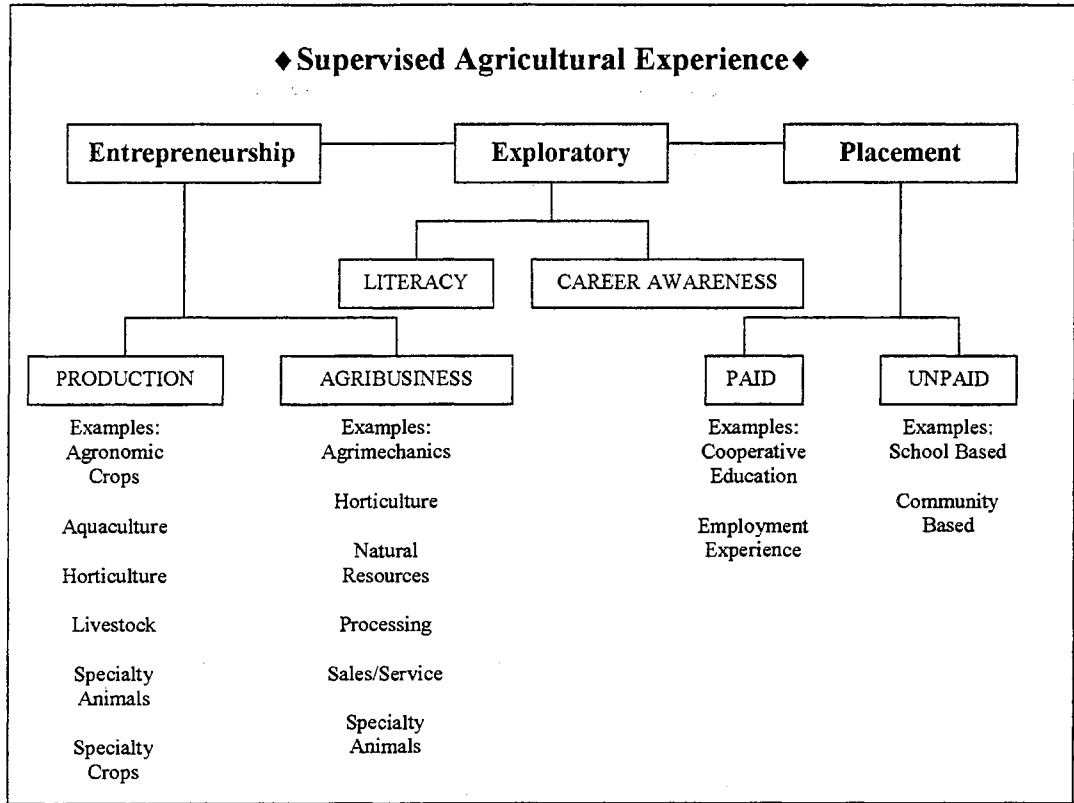


Figure 3.

The Supervised Agricultural Experience model.

Though an abundance of information is currently available to teachers regarding SAEs through the National FFA Organization, it is important to note that contradictory information is present. For example, the Local Program Success Guide (National FFA, First Edition) discussed four different types of SAEs: exploratory, research/experimentation/analysis, ownership/entrepreneurship, and placement. Another publication, the Agriculture Teacher’s Manual (National FFA Organization, 1998) provided different information. It stated, “An SAE may involve---

1. Student ownership of an agriculture-related enterprise;

2. Placement in an agriculture-related job in the community;
3. Placement in an agriculture-related job in the school's agricultural laboratory;
4. Placement in a research-based, home/community or experimentation setting”
(p. 10-2).

This contradictory information has resulted in confusion for teachers in considering what constitutes student SAEs. A recent issue of FFA Advisors: Making a Difference (National FFA Organization, 1999) addressed the issue of trying to determine what qualified as a valid SAE program. In response to this question, Ron Frederick, a thirty-year veteran teacher in Twin Valley, Pennsylvania, defined SAE as any opportunity related to agriculture that offered a record keeping opportunity. While others grapple with issues of validity, some readily adopted the new model for SAEs. With regard to the model, Neil Knoblock, an Agriculture Education teacher in Wellman, Iowa, stated the following, “The principles are the same, but the way we do them has to change because the industry has changed, students have changed and education has changed” (p. 3). Some examples of SAEs are found in Figure 2.

Though some confusion may exist regarding criteria for an SAE, benefits of SAEs are numerous. Pals (1988) found five benefits as perceived by students in Idaho. These were:

1. Opportunity to learn on their own;
2. Promote acceptance of responsibility;
3. Develop independence;
4. Pride in ownership; and

5. Learn to appreciate work.

Kaczor (1983) stated that SAEs “should help students in making decisions on agricultural occupation, whether on or off the farm” (p. 10). Ramsey concurred, stating:

“The skills and attitudes achieved in an SAE program well outweigh any monetary gain made by a small scale enterprise at any secondary school. These aptitudes are what will be the student qualities an employer will examine when interviewing for any occupational career.” (1989, p. 10).

Rawls (1982) also suggested that parents of Agricultural Education students recognize the educational and occupational benefits of SAEs and support educational programs that provide these benefits. Pals (1989) found that parents, employers and teachers viewed SAEs differently, but positively. Ramsey (1989) concluded:

“Successful SAE programs are indicative of a combination of success factors which include interested students, dynamic teachers, concerned parents, and supportive administrators and communities.” (p. 13)

Anydoh and Barrick (1990) found the quality and size of SAE programs was significantly and positively correlated to the number of years the student was in the agriculture program. Long and Israelsen (1983) also found a strong relationship between teacher emphasis and student achievement. From another perspective, while classroom instruction was found to improve SAE program quality, no study has supported the inverse (Dyer & Osborne, 1996). This research indicated that SAEs may not improve teachers’ classroom teaching, though enhanced classroom teaching may positively impact SAEs. Osborne (1988) also identified several obstacles to conducting quality SAE programs.

These included: lack of student motivation, limited student opportunities, lack of teacher time, poor student record keeping practices, inadequate financial resources and facilities, and low parent interest.

Dyer and Osborne (1996) concluded that SAE programs lacked definition, focus, and direction. The authors suggested that though new curricula have emerged, SAE programs have changed little. The authors also concluded that “new models of the SAE concept should be designed and implemented in response to changing student populations and curricula” (p. 27).

FFA

The National FFA Organization extends Agricultural Education beyond the classroom, providing its members opportunities to further improve agricultural skills and develop agricultural leadership, cooperation, and citizenship (Townsend and Carter, 1983). The FFA has been nationally acclaimed as an outstanding youth leadership development organization (Brannon, 1988). Maedgen stated its importance as:

“If you think about it for just a minute, the FFA is actually the part of the agricultural curriculum we have the least trouble justifying. It is the one part of the curriculum that is useful in virtually any walk of life” (1977, p. 173).

The components taught through participation in FFA activities are numerous and ever growing. In 1977, National FFA Executive Secretary Coleman Harris listed the following:

1. Learning the FFA Creed;

2. Participating in chapter meetings;
3. Serving on committees;
4. Participating in public and extemporaneous speaking;
5. Learning Parliamentary Procedure;
6. Participating in chapter group activities;
7. Serving as local, district, state, and national officers;
8. Attending leadership workshops, camps, conferences, and conventions (p. 7).

Perhaps it is the development of these leadership skills that sets FFA apart as most beneficial component of the program (Wingenbach & Kahler, 1997). Iverson (1982) commented that though students may not know their specific career objective, the leadership competencies developed such as speaking, parliamentary procedure, and other organizational skills, receives appreciation by students. Furthermore, several studies have concluded that the leadership competencies developed through FFA are beneficial to students. Carter and Townsend (1983) found that participants in 18 FFA activities had significantly higher perceptions of their leadership than non-participants. Since these activities were part of the FFA program, they enhanced and strengthened the leadership competencies of students.

Carter and Neason (1984) replicated the Carter and Townsend (1983) study and made similar conclusions. The authors found that individuals who participated more in FFA activities had more contacts with others and as a result broadened their frame of reference for comparison of their own self-perceived personal development. Overall conclusions of this study found the FFA to contribute to its members' personal development as outlined by the purposes of the organization.

The three sources of learning in an Agricultural Education program, the classroom, the SAE program, and the FFA are all useful in preparing young people for careers and life skills (Nelson, 1973). Environmental differences due to location and school size results in differences in the emphasis placed in each of these areas (Jones, 1980). Terry (1988) pointed out, "The common thread of all programs must be the training of young people for the various agricultural occupations" (p. 14).

Motivation for Enrolling and Becoming Involved

There are many possible reasons for students deciding to enroll or not enroll in Agricultural Education. With concern about declining numbers, Reis and Kahler (1995) suggested that population trends have shown a decline in the number of high school aged students as well as increases in high school graduation requirements. Moore, Kirby, and Becton (1997) also confirmed the idea of pressure on students to earn graduation credits and fulfillment of college entrance requirements, especially when block scheduling was a factor. Lam (1987) identified interpersonal reasons, school factors, significant others, socioeconomic and home factors as barriers that caused students not to enroll. Rossetti, Elliot, Price and McClay (1989) also found that non-FFA members enrolled in Agricultural Education because they were interested in agriculture, they needed a science credit, they thought it would be an easy class or they were forced to enroll.

From a different perspective, Ullrich and Stapper (1999) found that parents, agriculture teachers and other students in agriculture classes were more influential in causing students to enroll in an agriculture class, while school counselors and other teachers had relatively little influence. It was also found that the perceived fun of courses

and FFA activities were strong influences as were personal desires of students. Kotrlik (1987) also found that parents were dominant in influencing students to enroll in Agricultural Education courses. Herring, Marshall, and Briers (1989) determined that students would seek the advice of counselors, friends, parents, and teachers before enrolling in Agricultural Education courses. Additionally, Luft and Giese (1991) found that the agricultural teacher had an influence on how students perceived agriculture and whether they enrolled in an agriculture class.

Talbert (1997) stated that sociology and psychology decision-models provide a base for explaining why people choose to enroll or not enroll in a specific activity. To summarize the sociological model of Herr and Cramer (1992), people made enrollment decisions based on self-characteristics and environmental factors. These factors were further divided into four areas: genetic endowment and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills. Lipsett (1962) in similar research found that people make choices based on factors of social class membership, home influences, school, community, pressure groups, and role perceptions. These factors influenced decisions to join or not join an activity, group, course, or occupation.

Super, Crites, Hummel, Moser, Overstreet, and Warnath (1957) summarized psychological approaches to decision making by dividing career development into life stages and sub-stages. In the tentative sub-stage of the exploration stage, ages 15-24, adolescents examined career possibilities through fantasy, school classes, and part-time work. Super (1957) also described the school as a place that allowed for formal exploration of careers through courses, clubs, and organizations and other activities.

Though Brannon (1988) and others suggested that FFA membership is a major reason for students to enroll in Agricultural Education, a study by the National FFA Organization (1999) determined that only 56% of total Agricultural Education enrollees were FFA members. When teachers were asked why students did not become FFA members, 42% said some students do not believe that FFA membership is valuable; 26% said it is unrealistic to expect all agriculture students to be FFA members; and 21 percent said some students do not have adequate time to devote to FFA activities.

Brick (1998) studied FFA members attending the Washington Leadership Conference in order to determine variables influencing members' self-perceived leadership abilities. Influential variables included gender, plans after high school, FFA involvement, and hometown location, rural or urban. Length of membership in the FFA was not found as an influential factor. The author concluded that female FFA members with plans to attend a four-year college, from a large high school with high levels of involvement tended to have the strongest self-perceptions of their abilities. Recommendations included advisors facilitating increased involvement by all members in order to experience leadership roles.

A study by Baggett (1999) indicated three different types of Agricultural Education enrollees. The first group, termed the Natural Agriculturist, enrolled because they were truly interested in learning about agriculture and later pursuing a related career. These students tended to live in rural areas and have an agricultural background. The second group, termed the Naïve Agriculturist, enrolled because they viewed agriculture was fun, activities were hands on and they liked the teacher. These students wished to pursue a related career, but were from urban areas without the benefit of an agricultural

background. The third group, termed the Temporary Agriculturist, enrolled because the classes were perceived as fun, but had no intention of pursuing an agricultural career. Baggett concluded that none of these groups were being advised into Agricultural Education courses and that knowing more about why students enroll may assist teachers in recruiting and involvement efforts.

Traditional and Non-traditional Agricultural Education Students

Just who are non-traditional FFA members or Agricultural Education enrollees? The subject of non-traditional students has been a well-researched area from a variety of perspectives. Beginning in the 1970s, the idea of focusing instruction on less traditional production agriculture areas has been an area for concern. Thus, students enrolled in non-traditional agriculture courses were considered non-traditional. Studies in the 1980s focused more emphasis on urban versus rural perspectives and gender issues, labeling urban and females as non-traditional. More recently, the idea of those completing less than four years of vocational training has fallen under the term “non-traditional.” Each of these non-traditional perspectives will be discussed in this section.

To begin, it is important to note why such interest has been exhibited toward non-traditional students with respect to the time frame mentioned above. In 1976, enrollment in Agricultural Education secondary school programs was at a then national all-time high of over 697,000 students and over 509,000 FFA members (Hoover & Scanlon, 1991). Since that time a 1-3% drop in enrollment and membership has been seen each year

(National FFA Organization, 1998). A study by the National FFA Organization (1999) determined only 56% of Agricultural Education enrollees were also FFA members.

Some programs have experienced growth in this period of decline. One such state was Texas. After revamping course offerings to reflect a diversified, changing agriculture industry, 1988 enrollment figures revealed a 29% increase over the previous year's figures statewide (Marshall, Herring, & Briers, 1992). Marshall, Herring, and Briers (1992) found in their study of enrollment and membership factors that the newest group (first time enrollees 1989-90), those drawn to the new courses, were not expected to have an SAE and were also the largest group of FFA non-members. Now that almost ten years have passed since the adoption of new courses and procedures regarding FFA and SAE activities, Texas has seen a steady decline in FFA membership, possibly due to the influx of non-traditional members.

In the 1970s, Agricultural Education programs across the nation saw an increase in membership because girls were permitted to enroll and become FFA members. The report entitled Understanding Agriculture-New Directions for Education (National Research Council, 1988) stated the following:

“White males have mainly made up enrollment in vocational agriculture programs in the past and continue to do so. During the past decade, the enrollment of females has increased. Female enrollment has concentrated in a limited number of specialized vocational agriculture programs. (p. 13).

A study by Bell and Fritz (1992) found that counselors, instructors, parents, and students agreed female enrollment would increase if support systems were established.

Furthermore, the authors suggested that their conclusions were consistent with the literature and may have been a result of career information, counseling, and programming either consciously or unconsciously influenced by the perception of “gender appropriate” occupational roles.

A replication of the Bell and Fritz (1992) study was conducted on males rather than females finding similar results. Conclusions included:

1. Students, regardless of gender, need more career information explaining career opportunities in the agriculture industry.
2. Students need to be advised, regardless of gender, to enter into programs in which they indicate interest.
3. The critical considerations of traditional and nontraditional students (gender based) to enroll in Agricultural Education are more alike than they are different.

The authors concluded stating, “To continue to make strides in non-traditional enrollments in vocational courses, deterrents need to be addressed” (p. 99).

Similar findings were evident in a study by Sproles (1987) where females completing traditionally male vocational programs were studied. Though the author suggested increasing the availability of support systems, additional problems were found when agriculture was compared to other vocational areas. The author suggested the need for special efforts if female students were to succeed in educational programs and careers that were considered to be nontraditional.

Comparisons of students as farm and non-farm are also available. A study by Pettis (1977) contended that non-farm student enrollment continues to rise each year.

The author suggested that traditional programs emphasizing only production agriculture might not meet the needs of non-farm students. To combat this problem, the author suggested that many changes have occurred with regard to curriculum and program content. Findings of this particular study depicted vast similarities between farm and non-farm students, although non-farm students were less likely to have live animal projects and were more likely to be involved in some form of FFA leadership activity.

Terry (1988) surveyed teachers of urban secondary programs in Oklahoma with the following conclusions:

1. Great emphasis should be placed on traditional agricultural competencies such as animal and plant sciences, as well as farm shop and livestock skills.
2. Education in non-traditional competencies such as horticulture and business management should be given much emphasis.
3. All vocational agriculture students should be members of the FFA.
4. Local and state sponsored activities should be emphasized most in urban influenced chapters.
5. Placement, ownership, and non-traditional SAE programs should receive great emphasis in urban influenced areas.

While these conclusions are very similar for what would be expected in any program, it is important to note that these were based on teacher responses. Since most teachers came from a traditional agriculture background, this had serious implications for what was emphasized in urban programs in Oklahoma. Terry (1988) also made the following recommendations based on the review of literature:

1. Instructors must give careful consideration to the teaching of non-traditional and specific technical subjects to enhance students' career competencies.
2. Current award programs should be expanded, and new ones should be developed to encourage and reward the use of placement and non-traditional SAE training programs for urban students.

The idea of “completers” of a cohesive sequence of Agricultural Education courses has also been a point of interest with regard to traditional and non-traditional enrollees. In these types of studies, those completing a cohesive sequence were termed traditional, while those entering for only one or two courses were termed non-traditional. The perception of traditional students as the “good” students was reinforced by a study by Frazee and Briers (1987). This study concluded that students who completed a program in secondary Agricultural Education had a high employment rate. They also concluded that those participating in a balanced program of FFA and SAE activities tended to enter occupations at a significantly higher rate than those who had lower participation in activities.

Lisa Konkel, Agriculture Education teacher at Walworth Wisconsin, stated the following with regard to non-traditional enrollees:

“I have many students whose first agriculture class is biotechnology. They come in as juniors and seniors and suddenly they're exposed to all the FFA opportunities. Then they bemoan the fact that they should have started taking agriculture courses earlier. The bottom line is that many of

them feel that they're so far behind (in FFA) that they'll never catch up”
(National FFA Organization, 1999, p. 11).

Agricultural Education Programs

With Multiple Teachers

The inclusion of a discussion on multiple teacher departments is important because it is a parameter for selection of Agricultural Education programs for data collection in this study. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss descriptors attributed to the uniqueness of multiple teacher Agricultural Education programs.

The growth of Agricultural Education in the 1970s resulted in many schools with multiple teachers in Agricultural Education. The majority of multiple teacher departments were found near or in urban areas (Sharber, 1979). To paraphrase Brown (1976), the following factors were identified as contributors to the broader concept of agriculture and multiple teacher departments:

1. Increased emphasis on consolidation of smaller school districts;
2. Demands on departments to provide a broader scope of training;
3. Girls permitted to join FFA;
4. Renewed interest in occupational training in agriculture.

Collins (1969) also suggested that the primary reason cited for adding an additional teacher was the opportunity for one teacher to specialize in a different field of agriculture. Herring (1969) concurred, suggesting that a detailed program of Agricultural Education for the immediate and long-term future be prepared jointly by the teachers in the department.

Sharber (1976) concluded that though teachers in multiple teacher departments were able to divide teaching and outside work duties, a trend toward decreased SAE and FFA involvement by students was noted. The author recommended that all students be required to join FFA and be involved in some activity, not necessarily a livestock project, for an SAE. Terry (1988) reiterated this principle of diversified SAEs for students.

Contrary to the findings of Sharber (1976) several studies have found connections between multiple teacher departments and quality of SAEs. Straquadine (1990) determined that the quality and size of SAE programs was significantly and positively related to the number of teachers in a particular agriculture program. Harris and Newcomb (1985) also found that multiple teacher programs were more likely to place more emphasis on SAE programs because of individual teacher's ability to specialize.

Perhaps Barnett (1977) best summarized the multiple teacher concept as "A successful multiple teacher program will implant new ideas, values and responsibility that will add to the school system and community" (p. 99).

Summary

Foundations of Agricultural Education placed much emphasis on outside learning through SAEs and FFA while providing quality classroom instruction. From this review, it could be concluded that students who only involve themselves in course content miss the additional benefits of leadership gained from FFA activities and responsibility earned through SAEs. Brannon (1988) suggested critics and evaluators of Agricultural Education programs look beyond occupational titles and consider additional benefits such as leadership development of students.

Implications for non-traditional students of Agricultural Education include expanding the scope of SAEs (Barrick, Hughes, and Baker, 1991) and teaching a wider range of agricultural topics (Terry, 1988) while encouraging all students to participate in FFA activities (Brannon, 1988).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the procedures and design used in accomplishing the objectives of the study.

The objectives of the study were:

1. Describe selected characteristics of traditional and non-traditional enrollees in Agricultural Education courses.
2. Describe reasons traditional and non-traditional students enroll in Agricultural Education courses.
3. Describe traditional and non-traditional enrollees' participation in the Agricultural Education program.
4. Compare selected characteristics of traditional and non-traditional Agricultural Education enrollees.

In order to accomplish the objectives of the study, certain procedures were utilized to collect the necessary data. To describe these, this chapter is divided into the following sections: identification of population and sample, development of the instrument, collection of data and analysis of data.

Institutional Review Board

Federal regulations and Oklahoma State University policy require review and approval of all research studies that involve human subjects before investigators can begin their research. The Oklahoma State University Office of University Research Services and the Institutional Review Board conduct this review to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in biomedical and behavioral research. In compliance with the aforementioned policy, this study received the proper surveillance and was granted permission to continue as project IRB: AG-99-019. A copy of the approval form appears in Appendix C.

Identification of Population and Sample

The population consisted of junior and senior students enrolled in selected Agricultural Education programs in the Spring of 1999 in Oklahoma. A school profile was developed in order to select Agricultural Education departments in Oklahoma to participate in the study. The profile included schools with two-teachers or more in the department and a non-traditional area (Horticulture or Natural Resources) being taught. A list of twelve schools was compiled. This list was narrowed based on the likelihood of obtaining students enrolling in Agricultural Education for the first time as a junior or senior. The researcher was assisted by the staff in the Agricultural Education Division at the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education and Agricultural Education Faculty at Oklahoma State University to determine multi-teacher departments which fit the profile. This resulted in the selection of eight schools.

Development of the Instrument

A questionnaire was developed (Appendix B) utilizing scales and sections from the Marshall study, 1990. Sections and respective Cronbach's Alpha from this study include: class characteristics=.57, identity enhancement=.83, agricultural interest=.74, instrumental/practical=.60, significant others=.80, and circumstantial/disavowance=.58.

After the instrument was formulated, additions, deletions and corrections were solicited from the Agricultural Education faculty at Oklahoma State University and the supervisory staff at the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education. Suggested changes were made and the instrument was prepared for field-testing.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in a local school, not part of the study population, prior to the beginning of the actual study, using the same procedures used in the actual study. The teachers and students involved in the pilot study were asked to make comments and suggestions regarding any changes needed in directions, clarity, or other aspects of the survey. The results of this pilot study were tabulated to determine if changes needed to be made in scales. Following the pilot study, more specific directions on how to complete the instrument were added and the data collection process was set into motion.

Collection of Data

Initially, each selected school was contacted by a letter from Dr. Eddie Smith, the state program leader for the Agricultural Education Division of the Oklahoma Department of Vocational Technical Education, stating the purpose, importance, and procedure of the study (Appendix A). A follow up phone call was made to a teacher at each school to inquire concerning their willingness to participate.

Once confirmation was made and questions concerning procedures were answered, schools were visited by the researcher or an assistant. Each junior and senior in Agricultural Education classes that day was asked to complete the instrument after being read a disclosure statement (Appendix B). Questionnaires were collected and returned by the researcher or departmental faculty member visiting each school. All schools were visited in the month of April, 1999.

Collected data was first separated by school. School data was then separated into two groups: 1) those taking an Agricultural Education class for the first time as a junior or senior and 2) those who were previously enrolled in Agricultural Education. Questionnaires were then numbered to ensure that data was correctly entered. Questionnaires missing an entire category of data (Personal, Course, Enrollment, or Course Related Information) were discarded (Appendix B).

Analysis of Data

Because of the number of respondents and the statistical data that were required in the analysis, the information received from the data collection instrument was coded and entered into the Microsoft Excel Statistical Software Package.

Descriptive statistics, correlations, and t-tests were used to accomplish the analysis of the data (Pedhazur, 1982). The demographic portions of the instrument dealt with nominal data so frequencies and percentages were utilized. T-tests between traditional and non-traditional groups were used to determine if differences were statistically significant. An alpha level of .01 was selected as the significance level. Correlations were evaluated based on level of significance and strength of the relationship. Adjectives to describe the magnitude of correlations included: .99-.70=very high, .69-.50=substantial, .49-.30=moderate, .29-.10=low, and .09-.01=negligible (Davis, 1971).

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to describe characteristics of traditional and non-traditional Agricultural Education enrollees and the degree to which these groups become involved in the Agricultural Education program.

Objectives of the Study

To accomplish this purpose, the following objectives were developed:

1. Describe selected characteristics of traditional and non-traditional enrollees in Agricultural Education courses.
2. Describe reasons traditional and non-traditional students enroll in Agricultural Education courses.
3. Describe traditional and non-traditional enrollees' participation in the Agricultural Education program.
4. Compare selected characteristics of traditional and non-traditional Agricultural Education enrollees.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and analyze the collected data as related to the objectives. The findings are reported by objective.

Collected data was sorted into two categories: 1) those juniors and seniors taking their first Agricultural Education course as a junior or senior and 2) those juniors and seniors who had previous years of Agricultural Education. Throughout the remainder of this study, those juniors and seniors taking their first Agricultural Education course as a junior or senior will be referred to as “non-traditional” and those juniors and seniors who had previous years of Agricultural Education will be referred to as “traditional.”

Eight schools were found to fit the established school profile, being a multi-teacher department while teaching an expanded course offering of Horticulture or Natural Resources and being likely to have juniors and/or seniors as first time enrollees. This provided 393 useable questionnaires with 190 traditional and 203 non-traditional students (Table 1). 15 questionnaires were determined not to be useable because an entire category of information or more was missing.

Table 1

Summary of Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees By School

School	Total	Traditional	Non-Traditional
	N	N	N
School A	49	25	24
School B	41	17	24
School C	63	12	51
School D	24	12	12
School E	70	27	43
School F	69	44	25
School G	27	18	9
School H	50	35	15
Total	393	190	203
		48.35%	51.65%

Selected Characteristics of Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

Objective One was to describe selected characteristics of traditional and non-traditional enrollees. The selected variables used in this study included: gender, academic performance, residence, activities, plans after graduation, and Agricultural Education courses enrolled. A description of traditional and non-traditional enrollees will be addressed by variable, separately for traditional and non-traditional enrollees.

Traditional Enrollee

Of 393 useable responses, 190 respondents were traditional enrollees, those entering Agricultural Education before their junior or senior year. Table 2 depicts gender, academic performance, and residence. A majority of traditional enrollees were male (61.05%). Only 8.94% of traditional enrollees reported a academic performance at C or below, while the group academic performance was 3.04. With regard to residence, approximately half (46.32%) reported living in urban areas (city or town).

Table 2

Gender, Academic Performance, and Residence of Traditional Enrollees

Variable	N	%
Gender		
Male	116	61.05
Female	73	38.42
Academic Performance		
A's	15	7.89
A's & B's	83	43.68
B's	19	10.00
B's & C's	54	28.42
C's	8	4.21
C's & D's	7	3.68
D's or Below	2	1.05
Residence		
City	77	40.53
Town	11	5.79
Country	53	27.89
Farm	48	25.26

The traditional enrollees also provided information on plans after graduation and whether career intentions were related to agriculture (Table 3). Over two-thirds (78.95%) of traditional enrollees planned to attend college or receive technical training. With regard to career intentions, over one-third (40.00%) planned to pursue a career related to agriculture while 25.26% reported they would pursue a career outside agriculture. One-third of traditional enrollees reported being unsure as to whether their future career would be related to agriculture.

Table 3

Plans After Graduation and Career Intentions of Traditional Enrollees

Variable	N	%
Plans after Graduation		
College	106	55.79
Technical Training	44	23.16
Military	10	5.26
Immediate Employment	27	14.21
Career Intentions		
Ag Career	76	40.00
No Ag Career	48	25.26
Unsure	63	33.16

Traditional enrollees were provided a list of high school activities and asked to check those they had been involved. These findings are reported in Table 4 and reveal that FFA (95.79%), Athletics (45.79%), and Church Groups (25.79%) were the activities traditional enrollees reported being most involved while Hobby Clubs (4.21%), Cheerleading (4.21%), Newspaper (5.79%), and Debate (6.32%) were the activities in which traditional enrollees were least involved. The mean number of activities traditional enrollees were involved in was 3.14.

Table 4

Activities of Traditional Enrollees

Activity	Distribution	
	N	%
FFA	182	95.79
Athletics	87	45.79
Church Group	49	25.79
Vocational Club	34	17.89
4-H	32	16.84
Honor Society	33	16.84
Band	29	15.26
Student Council	25	13.16
FHA	21	11.05
Language Club	18	9.47
Boy/Girl Scouts	17	8.95
Debate	12	6.32
Newspaper	11	5.79
Cheerleading	8	4.21
Hobby Club	8	4.21
Other Club/Organization	30	15.79
Mean # of Organizations		3.14

To determine if a relationship existed between academic performance and the number of activities traditional enrollees were involved correlations were utilized. Table 5 shows a statistically significant and moderate correlation found between these two variables ($r = .32$). This suggests that as academic performance increased, to some extent, so did the number of activities traditional enrollees were involved.

Table 5

Correlations Between Academic Performance and Number of Organizations Involved for Traditional Enrollees

Variables	Correlation
Academic Performance/Organization Involvement	.32*

*Significant r at $\alpha=.01$

Traditional enrollees reported being enrolled most in Horticulture (31.05%) and Agricultural Mechanics (23.68%) (Table 6). A few (8.95%) of traditional enrollees were enrolled in multiple courses concurrently.

Table 6

Course Enrollment of Traditional Enrollees

Course	Distribution	
	N	%
Horticulture	59	31.05
Agriculture Mechanics	45	23.68
Animal Science	21	11.05
Natural Resources	14	7.37
Equine Science	12	6.32
Ag I,II	5	2.63
Agriscience	2	1.05
Multiple Course Including: Ag Business, Plant/Soil Science, Biotechnology	17	8.95

Non-Traditional Enrollee

Of the 393 useable instruments, 203 were from non-traditional enrollees, those entering Agricultural Education during their junior or senior year. Table 7 depicts gender, academic performance, and residence. One-half of non-traditional enrollees were male (49.75%). Only 6.90% of non-traditional enrollees reported grades at C or below. With regard to residence, 68.96% reported living in urban areas (city or town) while 30.05% reported living in a rural area (country or farm).

Table 7

Gender, Academic Performance, and Residence of Non-Traditional Enrollees

Variable	N	%
Gender		
Male	101	49.75
Female	102	50.25
Academic Performance		
A's	33	16.26
A's & B's	101	49.75
B's	4	1.97
B's & C's	39	19.21
C's	11	5.42
C's & D's	12	5.91
D's or Below	2	.99
Residence		
City	122	60.10
Town	18	8.86
Country	42	20.69
Farm	19	9.36

The non-traditional enrollee also provided information on plans after graduation and whether career intentions were related to agriculture (Table 8). Over three-fourths (75.37%) of non-traditional enrollees planned to attend college or receive technical training. With regard to career intentions, only 16.26% planned to pursue a career

related to agriculture while 56.16% reported they would pursue a career outside agriculture. 28.08% of non-traditional enrollees reported being unsure as to whether their future career would be related to agriculture.

Table 8

Plans After Graduation and Career Intentions of Non-Traditional Enrollees

Variable	N	%
Plans after Graduation		
College	124	61.08
Technical Training	29	14.29
Military	11	5.42
Immediate Employment	28	13.79
Career Intentions		
Ag Career	33	16.26
No Ag Career	114	56.16
Unsure	57	28.08

Non-traditional enrollees were provided a list of high school activities and asked to check those they had been involved (Table 9). FFA (65.52%), Athletics (53.69%), Church Groups (34.48%), and Honor Societies (27.59%) were the activities non-traditional enrollees reported being most involved while 4-H (1.48%), Boy/Girl Scouts (4.43%), and Hobby Clubs (6.90%) were the activities non-traditional enrollees were least involved. The mean number of activities non-traditional enrollees were involved was 3.32.

Table 9

Activities of Non-Traditional Enrollees

Activity	Distribution	
	N	%
FFA	133	65.52
Athletics	109	53.69
Church Group	70	34.48
Honor Society	56	27.59
Language Club	44	21.67
Band	43	21.18
Student Council	38	18.72
Vocational Club	32	15.76
FHA	32	15.76
Debate	26	12.81
Newspaper	26	12.81
Cheerleading	18	8.87
Hobby Club	14	6.90
Boy/Girl Scouts	9	4.43
4-H	3	1.48
Other Club/Organization	21	10.34
Mean # of Organizations		3.32

To determine if a relationship existed between academic performance and the number of activities in which non-traditional enrollees were involved, a correlation was utilized. Table 10 displays a statistically significant and moderate correlation found between these two variables ($r=.47$). This suggests that as academic performance increased, so did the number of activities non-traditional enrollees were involved.

Table 10

Correlations Between Academic Performance and Numbers of Organizations of Non-Traditional Enrollees

Variables	Correlation
Academic Performance/Organization Involvement	.47*

*Significant r at $\alpha=.01$

The majority of non-traditional enrollees reported being enrolled in Horticulture (66.10%) with a smaller percentage enrolled in Agricultural Mechanics (11.82%) (Table 11).

Table 11

Course Enrollment of Non-Traditional Enrollees

Course	Distribution	
	N	%
Horticulture	136	66.10
Agriculture Mechanics	24	11.82
Animal Science	12	5.91
Natural Resources	8	3.94
Equine Science	4	1.97
Ag I or II	4	1.97
Agriscience	3	1.48
Multiple Course Including: Ag Business, Plant/Soil Science, Biotechnology	5	2.46

Reasons for Enrolling

Objective Two was to describe reasons why traditional and non-traditional enrollees enrolled in Agricultural Education. Respondents were asked to respond to statements related to why they enrolled in Agricultural Education using a five point Likert-type scale. Statements were taken from the Marshall (1990) study. Factors with corresponding statements appear in Table 12.

Table 12

Factor Statements and Cronbach's Alpha

Factor Statements	Cronbach's Alpha	
	1990 Study	1999 Study
Class Characteristics	.57	.38
I thought I would like this class		
I liked the teacher(s)		
The name of this class sounded interesting		
Agriculture classes sounded fun		
I heard this class was easy		
Identity Enhancement	.83	.82
I could be a member of FFA		
I wanted to participate in shows		
I could earn money		
Agricultural Interest	.74	.74
I this class would prepare me for a for a career		
I enjoyed working with animals		
My involvement in agriculture got me interested		
Instrumental/Practical	.60	.44
I needed a science credit		
I enjoyed being outside the classroom		
I needed an elective class		
I could learn things that would be useful		
I could learn how to do things		
Significant Others	.80	.70
My counselor's suggestion		
My brother/sister's suggestion		
My parent or guardian's suggestion		
The principal's suggestion		
The ag teacher encouraged me		
Some of my friends were in this class		
Circumstantial/Disavowance	.58	.62
It was the only elective available		
I was placed in this class		

Respondents were also asked to respond to an open-ended question concerning why they enrolled in Agricultural Education. It should be noted that only one of the eight schools allowed science credit for Agricultural Education courses.

Traditional Enrollee

Table 13 depicts statements, mean scores, and standard deviations for each statement. Based on this information, traditional enrollees appeared to agree most with “I thought I would like this class” (M=4.45, SD=.77), “I enjoyed being outside the classroom” (M=4.39, SD=.94), “I could learn how to do things rather than just learn out of a text” (M=4.29, SD=.85), “Agriculture classes sounded fun” (M=4.28, SD=.95), “I could learn things in this class that would be useful to me” (M=4.27, SD=.89), and “I enjoyed working with animals” (M=4.24, SD=1.08).

Those statements traditional enrollees agreed least with were: “I was placed in this class by the people who do the scheduling” (M=1.73, SD=.89), “It was the only elective available” (M=1.79, SD=1.06), “The principal or other teacher suggested I take the class” (M=1.82, SD=1.02), “My counselor suggested I take the class” (M=1.9, SD=1.07), “I needed science credit” (M=2.07, SD=1.13).

Table 13

Traditional Enrollees Agreement with Enrollment Statements

Statements	Mean	SD
I thought I would like this class	4.45	0.77
I enjoyed being outside the classroom (greenhouse, barn, etc.)	4.39	0.94
I could learn how to do things rather than just learn out of a text	4.29	0.85
Agriculture classes sounded fun	4.28	0.95
I could learn things in this class that would be useful to me	4.27	0.89
I enjoyed working with animals	4.24	1.08
I liked the teacher(s)	4.05	1.06
I could be a member of the FFA	4.02	1.04
I thought this class would prepare me for a career in agriculture	3.88	1.19
I could have a project and/or earn money through work experience	3.83	1.15
I wanted to participate in shows and fairs	3.83	1.29
The name or description of the class sounded interesting to me	3.70	1.24
My involvement in agriculture at home got me interested in this class	3.65	1.35
Some of my friends were in this class	3.56	1.25
The agriculture teacher(s) encouraged me to take the class	3.06	1.38
My friends suggested I take the class	3.06	1.38
I heard this class was easy	3.02	1.37
My brother(s)/sister(s) or other relatives suggested I take the class	2.84	1.43
I needed an elective class	2.65	1.37
My parent(s) or guardian(s) suggested I take the class	2.63	1.34
I needed a science credit	2.07	1.13
My counselor suggested I take the class	1.90	1.07
The principal or other teacher suggested I take the class	1.82	1.02
It was the only elective available	1.79	1.06
I was placed in this class by the people who do the scheduling	1.73	.89

Responses to the open-ended question, “In your own words, why did you enroll in Agricultural Education?” provided additional data regarding reasons for enrolling. Statements were coded and later categorized into eight areas. Table 14 depicts these areas and numbers of responses for traditional enrollees.

Approximately one-third (31.58%) reported enrolling in Agricultural Education because of fun and hands on experiences. 20.52% reported enrolling because the course(s) would be useful in career preparation. Many (17.89%) traditional enrollees reported enrolling so they could learn more about agriculture while 12.63% enrolled because of the ability to learn leadership skills or show projects through FFA involvement.

Table 14

Responses to Open Ended Questions by Traditional Enrollees

Reason	Distribution	
	N	%
Fun/Hands On	60	31.58
Career Preparation	39	20.52
Learn About Agriculture	34	17.89
FFA/Leadership/Showing	24	12.63
Learn About Plants	8	4.21
Learn About Animals	7	3.68
Disavowance	7	3.68
Science Credit	1	.05

Non-Traditional Enrollee

Table 15 depicts statements, mean scores, and standard deviations for each statement. Based on this information, non-traditional enrollees appeared to agree most with “I thought I would like this class” (M=4.05, SD=1.04), “I enjoyed being outside the classroom” (M=3.96, SD=1.11), “I could learn things rather than just learn out of a text” (M=3.69, SD=1.20), “I could learn things in this class that would be useful to me” (M=3.66, SD=1.15), “I liked the teacher” (M=3.62, SD=1.26).

Those statements traditional enrollees agreed least with were: “The principal or other teacher suggested I take the class” (M=1.98, SD=1.02), “The agriculture teacher encouraged me to take the class” (M=2.15, SD=1.10), “I needed a science credit” (M=2.17, SD=1.24), “I was placed in this class by the people who do the scheduling” (M=2.17, SD=1.23).

Table 15

Non-Traditional Enrollees Agreement With Enrollment Statements

Statements	Mean	SD
I thought I would like this class	4.05	1.04
I enjoyed being outside the classroom (greenhouse, barn, etc.)	3.96	1.11
I could learn how to do things rather than just learn out of a text	3.69	1.20
I could learn things in this class that would be useful to me	3.66	1.15
I liked the teacher(s)	3.62	1.26
Agriculture classes sounded fun	3.48	1.23
The name or description of the class sounded interesting to me	3.42	1.22
I heard this class was easy	3.30	1.33
I enjoyed working with animals	3.22	1.32
Some of my friends were in this class	3.20	1.32
I needed an elective class	3.17	1.30
I could be a member of the FFA	2.97	1.37
I thought this class would prepare me for a career in agriculture	2.94	1.22
My friends suggested I take the class	2.81	1.43
I could have a project and/or earn money through work experience	2.79	1.23
My involvement in agriculture at home got me interested in this class	2.74	1.37
I wanted to participate in shows and fairs	2.60	1.16
My brother(s)/sister(s) or other relatives suggested I take the class	2.41	1.35
My parent(s) or guardian(s) suggested I take the class	2.30	1.19
My counselor suggested I take the class	2.28	1.21
It was the only elective available	2.22	1.23
I was placed in this class by the people who do the scheduling	2.17	1.23
I needed a science credit	2.17	1.24
The agriculture teacher(s) encouraged me to take the class	2.15	1.10
The principal or other teacher suggested I take the class	1.98	1.02

Responses to the open-ended question, “In your own words, why did you enroll in Agricultural Education?” provided additional data regarding reasons for enrolling. Statements were coded and later categorized into eight areas. Table 16 depicts these areas and numbers of responses for non-traditional enrollees.

Approximately one-third (35.47%) reported enrolling in Agricultural Education because of fun and hands on experiences. The opportunity to learn about plants was the reason 22.17% reported enrolling in the class. Many (13.79%) non-traditional enrollees reported enrolling as a result of disavowance. This would include those placed in the class or those with no other scheduling alternative. Few (1.48%) reported enrolling because of the opportunity to be involved in FFA activities.

Table 16

Responses to Open Ended Question by Non-Traditional Enrollees

Reason	N	%
Fun/Hands On	72	35.47
Learn About Plants	45	22.17
Disavowance	28	13.79
Career Preparation	19	9.36
Science Credit	9	4.43
Learn About Animals	7	3.45
Learn About Agriculture	7	3.45
FFA/Leadership/Showing	3	1.48

Involvement in the Program

Objective three was to describe traditional and non-traditional enrollees' involvement in program participation areas. These areas included FFA membership and activities and the Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) Program. Traditional and non-traditional enrollees will be described separately with regard to FFA and SAE Status.

Participants were asked to respond to a question related to their status as an FFA member. They were also given a list of fifteen FFA activities and asked to check those in which they had participated. Based on the number of activities involved, each respondent was assigned a category to represent the level of involvement: None (0 activities), Limited (1-3 activities), Active (4-7 activities), and Committed (8-15 activities).

SAE Status was determined by asking respondents whether they had an SAE, what the SAE was, and whether or not records were kept.

Traditional Enrollee

With regard to FFA membership Table 17 summarizes an overwhelming majority (88.94%) of traditional enrollees were also FFA members with very few who were not members (6.84%) or unsure of membership status (1.05%).

Table 17

FFA Membership of Traditional Enrollees

Membership	N	%
Member	169	88.94
Not a Member	13	6.84
Unsure	2	1.05
No Response	6	3.16

Table 18 depicts the FFA activities traditional enrollees were most involved. FFA Fundraising (71.05%), FFA Livestock Shows/Fairs (65.26%), FFA Chapter Banquet (62.63%), FFA Field Trip (61.05%), and FFA Community Activities (50.00%) topped the list. Additionally, the activities traditional enrollees were least involved included Made for Excellence Conference (15.79%), FFA Alumni Camp (21.05%), and FFA Committee Chairperson (21.58%).

Table 18

FFA Activities of Traditional Enrollees

Activity	N	%
FFA Fundraising	135	71.05
FFA Livestock Shows/Fairs	124	65.26
FFA Chapter Banquet	119	62.63
FFA Field Trip	116	61.05
FFA Community Activities	95	50.00
FFA Judging Contests	87	45.79
State FFA Convention	75	39.47
FFA Award Applications	72	37.89
FFA Committee Member	69	36.32
FFA Leadership/Speaking Contests	52	27.37
National FFA Convention	52	27.37
FFA Chapter Officer	44	23.16
FFA Committee Chairperson	41	21.58
FFA Alumni Camp	40	21.05
Made For Excellence Conference	30	15.79

To determine FFA Status, the number of activities each traditional enrollee participated was classified as None (0 activities), Limited (1-3 activities), Active (4-7 activities), and Committed (8-15 activities) (Table 19). The majority (64.73%) of traditional enrollees were either Active or Committed in number of FFA activities while 14.21% were involved in no activities.

Table 19

FFA Status of Traditional Enrollees

Activity Level	N	%
None (0)	27	14.21
Limited (1-3)	40	21.05
Active (4-7)	56	29.47
Committed (8-15)	67	35.26
Total	190	100.00

With regard to SAE Status, 42.63% reported having an SAE and keeping a record book (Table 20). Types of SAE's (Table 21) reported by traditional enrollees included a majority (42.63%) with production types while a surprising 47.37% reported no SAE at all.

Table 20

SAE/Record Book Status of Traditional Enrollees

Status	N	%
Yes/Yes	81	42.63
Yes/No	19	10.00
No/No	90	47.37

Table 21

Types of SAEs of Traditional Enrollees

Type of SAE	N	%
Production	81	42.63
Agribusiness	6	3.16
Paid Placement	9	4.74
Unpaid Placement	4	2.11
None	90	47.37

To determine if relationships existed between SAE and FFA involvement and Academic Performance and FFA Status, correlations were utilized (Table 22). SAE and FFA Status did produce a positively strong and statistically significant correlation ($r=.61$), while a weaker correlation was found between Academic Performance and FFA Status ($r=.24$). These relationships suggest that traditional enrollees with SAEs were more likely to be involved in more FFA activities just as those involved in more FFA activities were more likely to have an SAE. Also, the higher the Academic Performance, the more activities traditional enrollees would be expected to be involved.

Table 22

Correlations Between Selected Variables for Traditional Enrollees

Variables	Correlation
SAE/FFA Status	.61*
Academic Performance/FFA Status	.24*

*Significant r at $\alpha=.01$

Non-Traditional Enrollee

With regard to FFA membership and illustrated in Table 23, a majority (63.05%) of non-traditional enrollees were also FFA members with approximately one-third (31.03%) not being members.

Table 23

FFA Membership of Non-Traditional Enrollees

Membership	N	%
Member	128	63.05
Not a Member	63	31.03
Unsure	7	3.45
No Response	5	2.47
Total	203	100.00

Table 24 shows the FFA activities non-traditional enrollees were most involved. FFA Fundraising (31.53%), FFA Field Trip (24.63%), FFA Chapter Banquet (13.79%), FFA Judging Contests (12.81%), and FFA Community Activities (11.33%) topped the list. Additionally, the activities non-traditional enrollees were least involved included FFA Committee Chairperson (.00%), FFA Leadership/Speaking Contests (.99%), and FFA Chapter Officer (.99%).

Table 24

FFA Activities of Non-Traditional Enrollees

Activity	N	%
FFA Fundraising	64	31.53
FFA Field Trip	50	24.63
FFA Chapter Banquet	28	13.79
FFA Judging Contests	26	12.81
FFA Community Activities	3	11.33
FFA Committee Member	19	9.36
FFA Livestock Shows/Fairs	19	9.36
State FFA Convention	10	4.93
National FFA Convention	4	1.97
Made For Excellence Conference	4	1.97
FFA Alumni Camp	3	1.47
FFA Award Applications	3	1.47
FFA Chapter Officer	2	.99
FFA Leadership/Speaking Contests	2	.99
FFA Committee Chairperson	0	.00

To determine FFA Status, various activity levels were established based on the number of activities in which each non-traditional enrollee participated. The levels were: None (0 activities), Limited (1-3 activities), Active (4-7 activities), and Committed (8-15 activities). Table 25 was developed to summarize the distribution of these respondents with respect to this variable. The majority (87.19%) of non-traditional enrollees were either involved in FFA activities to a None or Limited extent while only .99% were involved at a Committed level.

Table 25

FFA Status of Non-Traditional Enrollees

Activity Level	N	%
None (0)	104	51.23
Limited (1-3)	73	35.96
Active (4-7)	24	11.82
Committed (8-15)	2	.99

With regard to SAE Status, only 3.94% reported having an SAE and keeping a record book (Table 26). A larger percentage (31.53%) reported having an SAE but no record book. Types of SAE's (Table 27) reported by non-traditional enrollees included a majority (26.60%) with unpaid placement types (made up of those who care for a plant in the school greenhouse) while a large majority (64.53%) reported no SAE at all.

Table 26

SAE/Record Book Status of Non-Traditional Enrollees

Status	N	%
Yes/Yes	8	3.94
Yes/No	64	31.53
No/No	131	64.53

Table 27

Types of SAEs of Non-Traditional Enrollees

Type of SAE	N	%
Production	7	3.45
Agribusiness	1	.49
Paid Placement	3	1.48
Unpaid Placement	54	26.60
None	131	64.53

To determine if relationships existed for non-traditional enrollees between SAE and FFA involvement and Academic Performance and FFA Status, correlations were utilized (Table 28). SAE and FFA Status did produce a low, positive, statistically significant correlation ($r = .25$) while Academic Performance and FFA Status did not produce a statistically significant correlation ($r = .16$). This suggests that non-traditional enrollees with SAEs were more likely to be involved in more FFA activities just as those involved in more FFA activities were more likely to have an SAE. However, no relationship appeared to be present between Academic Performance and FFA activities for non-traditional enrollees.

Table 28

Correlations Between Selected Variables for Non-Traditional Enrollees

Variables	Correlation
SAE/FFA Status	.25*
Academic Performance/FFA Status	.16

*Significant r at $\alpha = .01$

Comparison of Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

The purpose of Objective Four was to compare traditional and non-traditional enrollees. Comparisons will be addressed variable by variable, in the order previously presented for Objectives One through Three.

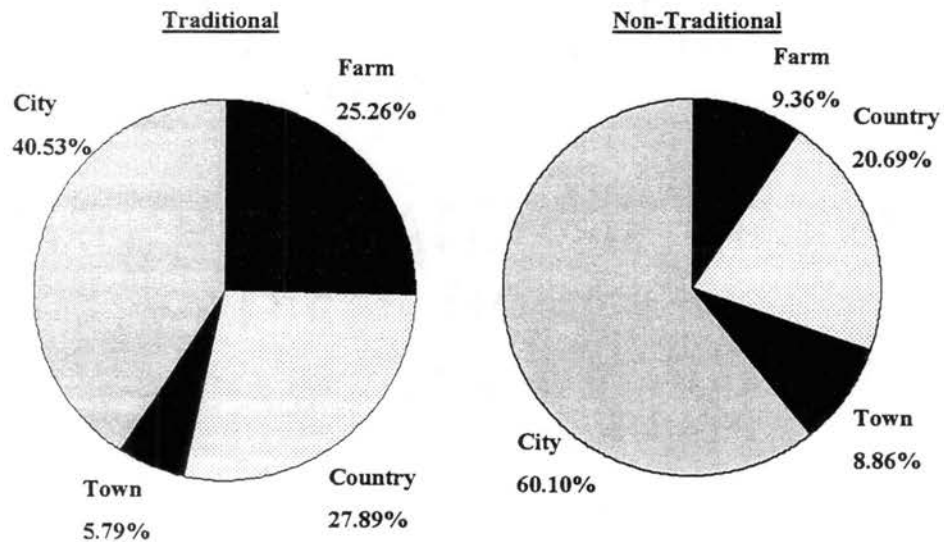
Differences were present in the gender of traditional and non-traditional enrollees (Table 29). With slightly more than one-third of the traditional enrollees, and one-half of the non-traditional enrollees being female.

Table 29

Gender of Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

Gender	Traditional		Non-Traditional	
	N	%	N	%
Male	116	61.05	101	49.75
Female	74	38.42	102	50.25

Place of residence (Figure 4) for traditional and non-traditional enrollees did differ significantly ($P(t) = .00000$) with a larger percentage of non-traditional enrollees (60.10%) living in the city compared to 40.53% for traditional enrollees. Fewer than 10 percent of non-traditional enrollees lived on farms compared to 25.26% of the traditional enrollees. However, plans after graduation did not differ significantly for traditional and non-traditional enrollees (Figure 5).

Figure 4.

Place of residence for traditional and non-traditional enrollees.

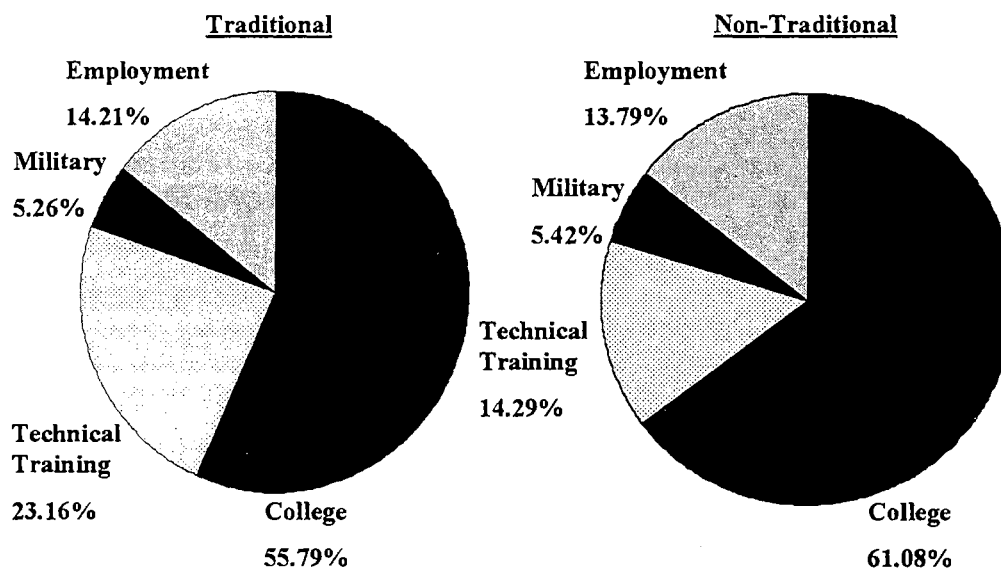


Figure 5.

Plans after graduation for traditional and non-traditional enrollees.

Career intentions related to an agricultural career differed for traditional and non-traditional enrollees (Figure 6). Of the traditional enrollees, 40.00% reported career intentions related to agriculture compared to only 16.26% for non-traditional enrollees; only 25.26% of traditional enrollees reported career intentions other than agriculture while non-traditional enrollees reported 56.16%.

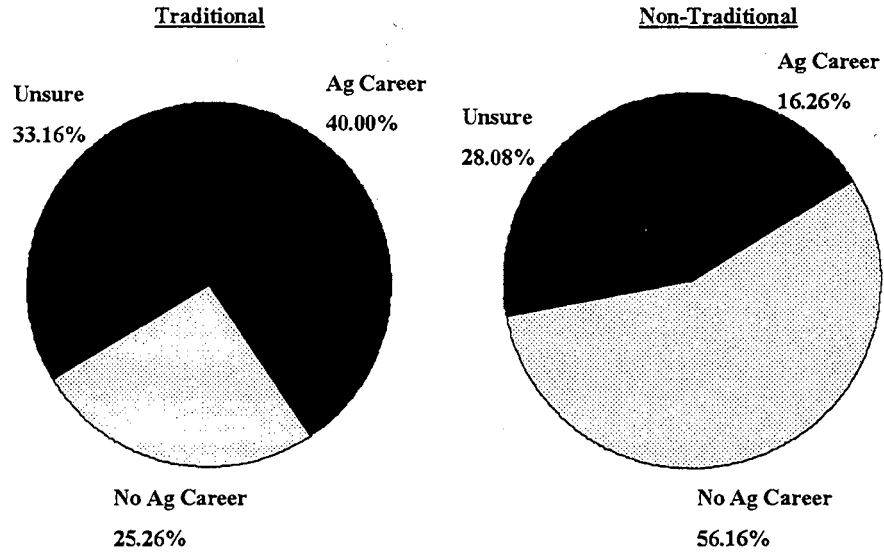


Figure 6.

Career intentions of traditional and non-traditional enrollees.

Differences between traditional and non-traditional enrollees' academic performance were not seen (Table 30). Those slight differences present were not statistically significant at $\alpha=.01$.

Table 30

Academic Performance of Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

Grade	Traditional		Non-Traditional	
	N	%	N	%
A's	15	7.89	33	16.26
A's & B's	83	43.68	101	49.75
B's	19	10.00	4	1.97
B's & C's	54	28.42	39	19.21
C's	8	4.21	11	5.42
C's & D's	7	3.68	12	5.91
D's or Below	2	1.05	2	.99
Overall Academic Performance Index		3.04		3.15

P(t)=0.108

With regard to correlated variables (Table 31), differences were found in the strength of the correlation between Academic Performance and Organization Involvement as this relationship appeared to be stronger for non-traditional enrollees ($r=.47$). The reverse is true for the relationship between SAE and FFA Status as a stronger relationship existed for traditional enrollees ($r=.61$). A more prominent difference was seen in the relationship between Academic Performance and FFA Status as a statistically significant relationship existed for traditional enrollees that was not seen for non-traditional enrollees, though the practical difference was minimal.

Table 31

Correlations Between Selected Variables for Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

Variables	Traditional Correlation	Non-Traditional Correlation
Academic Performance/Organization Involvement	.32*	.47*
SAE/FFA Status	.61*	.25*
Academic Performance/FFA Status	.24*	.16

*Significant r at $\alpha=.01$

With regard to activities, traditional and non-traditional enrollees were very similar (Table 32). No statistically significant difference was found in the number of activities traditional and non-traditional enrollees were involved.

Table 32

Activities of Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

Activity	Traditional		Non-Traditional	
	N	%	N	%
FFA	182	95.79	133	65.52
Athletics	87	45.79	109	53.69
Honor Society	33	16.84	56	27.59
Church Group	49	25.79	70	34.48
Band	29	15.26	43	21.18
Vocational Club	34	17.89	32	15.76
Student Council	25	13.16	38	18.72
Language Club	18	9.47	44	21.67
FHA	21	11.05	32	15.76
4-H	32	16.84	3	1.48
Debate	12	6.32	26	12.81
Newspaper	11	5.79	26	12.81
Cheerleading	8	4.21	18	8.87
Hobby Club	8	4.21	14	6.90
Boy/Girl Scouts	17	8.95	9	4.43
Other Club/Organization	30	15.79	21	10.34
Mean # of Organizations	3.14		3.32	P(t)=0.355

Few differences were found in the Agricultural Education course enrollment of traditional and non-traditional enrollees (Table 33). However, a larger proportion, 66.10%, of non-traditional enrollees took Horticulture as compared to 31.05% of traditional enrollees. A greater percentage (8.95%) of traditional enrollees were enrolled in multiple courses concurrently, compared to only 2.46% of non-traditional enrollees.

Table 33

Course Enrollment of Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

Course	Traditional		Non-Traditional	
	N	%	N	%
Horticulture	59	31.05	136	66.10
Agriculture Mechanics	45	23.68	24	11.82
Animal Science	21	11.05	12	5.91
Natural Resources	14	7.37	8	3.94
Equine Science	12	6.32	4	1.97
Ag I or II	5	2.63	4	1.97
Agriscience	2	1.05	3	1.48
Multiple Courses Including: Ag Business, Plant/Soil Science, Biotechnology	17	8.95	5	2.46

Comparisons between traditional and non-traditional enrollees agreement with enrollment statements (Table 34) using t-tests revealed statistically significant differences in all statements except: "I needed science credit" ($t=.79$), "The principal or other teacher suggested I take the class" ($t=1.47$), "My friends suggested I take the class" ($t=-1.78$), "I heard this class was easy" ($t=2.04$), "The name or description of the class sounded interesting to me" ($t=-2.24$).

Table 34

Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees' Agreement with Enrollment Statements

Statement	Traditional		Non Traditional		T
	Mean	N	Mean	N	
I wanted to participate in shows and fairs	3.83	187	2.60	200	-9.94 *
I could have a project and/or earn money through work experience	3.83	188	2.79	200	-8.57 *
I could be a member of the FFA	4.02	188	2.97	201	-8.48 *
I enjoyed working with animals	4.24	188	3.22	200	-8.29 *
I thought this class would prepare me for a career in agriculture	3.88	189	2.94	199	-7.70 *
The agriculture teacher(s) encouraged me to take the class	3.06	188	2.15	199	-7.16 *
Agriculture classes sounded fun	4.28	188	3.48	198	-7.09 *
My involvement in agriculture at home got me interested in this class	3.65	189	2.74	199	-6.61 *
I could learn things in this class that would be useful to me	4.27	188	3.66	201	-5.76 *
I could learn how to do things rather than just learn out of a text	4.29	188	3.69	197	-5.63 *
I thought I would like this class	4.45	189	4.05	200	-4.34 *
I enjoyed being outside the classroom (greenhouse, barn, etc.)	4.39	187	3.96	196	-4.03 *
I was placed in this class by the people who do the scheduling	1.73	188	2.17	200	3.97 *
I needed an elective class	2.65	186	3.17	199	3.79 *

Table 34 (Continued)

	Traditional		Non Traditional		T
	Mean	N	Mean	N	
I liked the teacher(s)	4.05	187	3.62	198	-3.63 *
It was the only elective available	1.79	185	2.22	200	3.60 *
My counselor suggested I take the class	1.90	184	2.28	197	3.29 *
My brother(s)/sister(s) or other relatives suggested I take the class	2.84	186	2.41	201	-3.06 *
Some of my friends were in this class	3.56	187	3.20	199	-2.75 *
My parent(s) or guardian(s) suggested I take the class	2.63	189	2.30	199	-2.52 *
The name or description of the class sounded interesting to me	3.70	189	3.42	201	-2.24
I heard this class was easy	3.02	189	3.30	200	2.04
My friends suggested I take the class	3.06	189	2.81	200	-1.78
The principal or other teacher suggested I take the class	1.82	186	1.98	200	1.47
I needed a science credit	2.07	189	2.17	200	.79

*Significant at $\alpha=.01$

Responses to the open-ended question produced differences between traditional and non-traditional enrollees (Table 35). A larger percentage of traditional enrollees enrolled for “Career Preparation,” to “Learn About Agriculture,” and “FFA/Leadership/Showing” while a larger percentage of non-traditional enrollees enrolled to “Learn About Plants” and for “Disavowance” reasons. Traditional and non-traditional enrollees were similar with regard to “Fun/Hands On” as a reason for enrolling at 31.58% and 35.47%, respectively.

Table 35

Responses to Open Ended Questions by Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

Reason	Traditional		Non-Traditional	
	N	%	N	%
Fun/Hands On	60	31.58	72	35.47
Career Preparation	39	20.52	19	9.36
Learn About Plants	8	4.21	45	22.17
Learn About Agriculture	34	17.89	7	3.45
FFA/Leadership/Showing	24	12.63	3	1.48
Disavowance	7	3.68	28	13.79
Learn About Animals	7	3.68	7	3.45
Science Credit	1	.05	9	4.43

Responses to a statement regarding FFA membership also revealed differences between traditional and non-traditional enrollees (Table 36). Though the majority of both groups were members, a disparate number of non-traditional enrollees were not members (31.03%).

Table 36

FFA Membership of Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

Membership	Traditional		Non-Traditional	
	N	%	N	%
Member	169	88.94	128	63.05
Not a Member	13	6.84	63	31.03
Unsure	2	1.05	7	3.45
No Response	6	3.16	5	2.46

Table 37 displays the frequency and percentage of FFA activities traditional and non-traditional enrollees were involved. Overall, a greater percentage of traditional enrollees were involved in all activities as compared to non-traditional enrollees. It should also be noted that “FFA Livestock Shows and Fairs” ranked second in participation for traditional enrollees while less than ten percent of non-traditional enrollees participated in this activity. Additionally, the activity most participated in by both groups, “FFA Fundraising,” was also disparate with 71.05% of traditional and 31.53% on non-traditional enrollees participating.

Table 37

FFA Activities of Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

Activity	Traditional		Non-Traditional	
	N	%	N	%
FFA Fundraising	135	71.05	64	31.53
FFA Field Trip	116	61.05	50	24.63
FFA Chapter Banquet	119	62.63	28	13.79
FFA Judging Contests	87	45.79	26	12.81
FFA Community Activities	95	50.00	23	11.33
FFA Committee Member	69	36.32	19	9.36
FFA Livestock Shows/Fairs	124	65.26	19	9.36
State FFA Convention	75	39.47	10	4.93
National FFA Convention	52	27.37	4	1.97
Made For Excellence Conference	30	15.7	94	1.97
FFA Alumni Camp	40	21.05	3	1.47
FFA Award Applications	72	37.89	3	1.47
FFA Chapter Officer	44	23.16	2	.99
FFA Leadership/Speaking Contests	52	27.37	2	.99
FFA Committee Chairperson	41	21.58	0	.00

Additional differences were seen in FFA Status (Table 38). The number of FFA activities traditional and non-traditional enrollees participated differed greatly with 14.21% of traditional and 51.23% of non-traditional enrollees involved in no activities. Also, 35.26% of traditional and .99% of non-traditional enrollees were involved at the Committed level.

Table 38

FFA Status of Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

Activity Level		Traditional		Non-Traditional	
		N	%	N	%
None	(0)	27	14.21	104	51.23
Limited	(1-3)	40	21.05	73	35.96
Active	(4-7)	56	29.47	24	11.82
Committed	(8-15)	67	35.26	2	.99

With regard to SAE Status (Table 39), differences were again visible. Those enrollees reporting an SAE and record book were much higher for traditional (42.63%) than non-traditional (3.94%) enrollees. A much larger percentage of non-traditional enrollees (31.53%) reported an SAE but no record book as compared to traditional enrollees (10.00%). A large proportion of both traditional and non-traditional enrollees did not have an SAE.

Table 39

SAE Status of Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

SAE/Record Book Status	Traditional		Non-Traditional	
	N	%	N	%
Yes/Yes	81	42.63	8	3.94
Yes/No	19	10.00	64	31.53
No/No	90	47.37	131	64.53

Differences were also found in the types of SAEs of traditional and non-traditional enrollees (Table 40). Most (42.63%) traditional enrollees reported production SAEs (owning livestock, producing crops, etc.) while most (26.60%) non-

traditional enrollees reported unpaid placement SAEs (having a plant to care for in the greenhouse). For both groups, the majority reported no SAE.

Table 40

Types of SAEs of Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

Type of SAE	Traditional		Non-Traditional	
	N	%	N	%
Production	81	42.63	7	3.45
Agribusiness	6	3.16	1	.49
Paid Placement	9	4.74	3	1.48
Unpaid Placement	4	2.11	54	26.60
None	90	47.37	131	64.53

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review and summary of this study. Conclusions, recommendations, and implications were based on an analysis and interpretation of the data presented.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine characteristics of traditional and non-traditional Agricultural Education enrollees and the degree to which these groups participate.

Summary

Course changes increased the enrollment in Agricultural Education by 29% over a one year period in Texas (Marshall, Herring, & Briers, 1992). At the same time, FFA membership increased by only 13%. This occurred while some states maintained enrollment and membership numbers. Larger schools with multiple teacher Agricultural Education departments have been able to offer a larger variety of courses, drawing less traditional students into programs. In several states, enrollment numbers have increased while FFA membership has decreased, especially over the last five years (National FFA

Organization, 1998). Likewise, the National FFA Organization reported only 47% of Agricultural Education enrollees maintain SAEs. The suspected cause for this inequality is the influx of more non-traditional members into Agricultural Education programs who enroll for specific courses, but never learn or gain the benefits of FFA or SAE activities.

The population in this study consisted of junior and senior students enrolled in selected Agricultural Education programs in the Spring of 1999 in Oklahoma. A school profile was developed in order to select Agricultural Education departments in Oklahoma to participate in the study. The profile included a two-teacher department with a non-traditional area (Horticulture or Natural Resources) being taught. The population was divided into two groups based on point of enrollment in Agricultural Education. Those enrolling for the first time as a junior or senior formed the non-traditional group while those enrolling before their junior or senior year formed the traditional group.

A researcher-developed instrument containing demographic items, enrollment, FFA, and SAE questions was distributed to each junior and senior in those schools fitting the established profile. This effort resulted in a total of 393 useable instruments with 190 traditional and 203 non-traditional enrollees. Data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics and t-tests were utilized to describe each group and determine differences.

Objectives of the Study

To accomplish this purpose, the following objectives were obtained:

1. Describe selected characteristics of traditional and non-traditional enrollees in Agricultural Education courses.
2. Describe reasons traditional and non-traditional students enroll in Agricultural Education courses.
3. Describe traditional and non-traditional enrollees' participation in the Agricultural Education program.
4. Compare selected characteristics of traditional and non-traditional Agricultural Education enrollees.

Major Findings of the Study

Selected Characteristics of Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

Objective One was to describe selected characteristics of traditional and non-traditional enrollees in Agricultural Education courses. The selected variables used in this study included: gender, academic performance, residence, plans after graduation, activities, and courses enrolled. Profiles of the traditional and non-traditional enrollee are summarized in Table 41.

Table 41

Profile of Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

Characteristic	Traditional	Non-Traditional
Gender	Male	Male or Female
Academic Performance	3.04	3.15
Residence	Country/Farm	City/Town
Plans after graduation	College	College
Career intentions	Ag Career	No Ag Career
Activities	FFA Athletics Church Group	FFA Athletics Church Group
Mean number activities	3.14	3.32
Ag Ed Courses enrolled	Horticulture Ag Mechanics	Horticulture Ag Mechanics

Reasons for Enrolling

Objective two was to describe reasons traditional and non-traditional students enrolled in Agricultural Education courses. Positive reasons for traditional and non-traditional enrollees are summarized in Table 42.

Table 42

Most Positive Agreement Statements for Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

Statement	Mean	SD
<u>Traditional Enrollee</u>		
I thought I would like this class	4.45	0.77
I enjoyed being outside the classroom (greenhouse, barn, etc.)	4.39	0.94
I could learn how to do things rather than just learn out of a text	4.29	0.85
Agriculture classes sounded fun	4.28	0.95
I could learn things in this class that would be useful to me	4.27	0.89
<u>Non-Traditional Enrollee</u>		
I thought I would like this class	4.05	1.04
I enjoyed being outside the classroom (greenhouse, barn, etc.)	3.96	1.11
I could learn how to do things rather than just learn out of a text	3.69	1.20
I could learn things in this class that would be useful to me	3.66	1.15
I liked the teacher(s)	3.62	1.26

Involvement in the Program

Objective three was to describe traditional and non-traditional enrollees' involvement in the Agricultural Education program. Table 43 summarizes FFA Membership, FFA Activities, FFA Status, SAE Status, and Types of SAEs for traditional and non-traditional enrollees.

Table 43

FFA and SAE Characteristics of Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

Characteristic	Traditional	Non-Traditional
FFA Membership	Member (88.94%)	Member (63.05%)
FFA Activities	FFA Fundraising FFA Livestock Show/Fair FFA Chapter Banquet	FFA Fundraising FFA Field Trip FFA Chapter Banquet
FFA Status	Committed (35.26%)	None (51.23%)
Type of SAE	None (47.37%) Production	None (64.53%) Unpaid Placement
Record Book Status	None (57.37%)	None (96.06%)

Comparison of Traditional and Non-Traditional Enrollees

The purpose of objective four was to compare traditional and non-traditional enrollees.

1. Traditional and non-traditional enrollees differed in gender. Traditional enrollees tended to be male while non-traditional enrollees were male or female.
2. More traditional enrollees tended to live on farms or in the country while non-traditional enrollees tended to live in the city or in town.
3. Traditional and non-traditional enrollees differed on the relationship between academic performance and FFA Status. While a positive relationship was present for traditional enrollees, no relationship was present for non-traditional enrollees.
4. Traditional and non-traditional enrollees differed significantly on most agreement with enrollment statements though rank of statements showed little difference.

5. Traditional enrollees tended to enroll for “Career Preparation” and to “Learn About Agriculture” while non-traditional enrollees tended to enroll to “Learn About Plants” and for “Disavowance” reasons.
6. Many non-traditional enrollees were not FFA members while being less involved in FFA activities than traditional enrollees.
7. More traditional enrollees maintained an SAE and kept records than non-traditional enrollees.
8. While the majority of both groups did not have SAEs, traditional enrollees tended to report production type SAEs and non-traditional enrollees reported unpaid placement type SAEs.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study the following conclusions were made:

1. Demographic characteristics of traditional and non-traditional were similar except in the areas of gender and place of residence. This finding concurred with previous research classifying both females (Bell & Fritz, 1992; Sproles, 1987) and those from urban areas (Pettis, 1977; Terry, 1988) as non-traditional enrollees. For practical purposes, traditional and non-traditional enrollees were not different.
2. Traditional enrollees with higher academic performances were more likely to be involved in a greater number of FFA activities. This finding was not true for non-traditional enrollees indicating that point of entry, regardless of academic performance, was a factor in student involvement in activities.
3. Traditional and non-traditional enrollees were more alike than different with regard to reasons for enrolling. However, differences were found with level of agreement with enrollment statements and responses to the open-ended question. Though the review of literature cited influence of others and science credit as reasons for students to enroll (Lam, 1987; Herring, Marshall, & Briers, 1989; Kotrlik, 1987), these were not factors for either group of enrollees in this study.
4. Non-traditional enrollees were not members of FFA nor were they involved in FFA activities. Late entrance was determined to be a significant factor in students' lack of involvement in FFA activities. Previous research had not specified point of entry as a factor in students' involvement in student organizations.

5. Traditional and non-traditional enrollees do not have an SAE. This concurred with previous research in other states and nation wide (National FFA Organization, 1999; Sharber, 1979). Regardless of the benefits of SAEs stated in the literature (Rawls, 1982; Pals, 1989; & Ramsey, 1989), students continue to pass through Agricultural Education programs without having SAEs or record books.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Agricultural Education based on these conclusions include continuing to work toward recruiting a diverse student population. With this comes the responsibility of providing relevant activities for all students and making them aware of the opportunities available through program participation areas. Additionally, teachers should work toward including ALL students in different types of activities rather than including only those who are early entrants into the program. The National FFA Organization may also be required to add incentives for late entrance enrollees including additional award areas.

A major point of concern emerges with the apparent lack of SAEs across both groups. Currently, SAE is posed as an integral part of the Agricultural Education Model. Because of the lack of SAEs, either SAE expectations need to be clarified or the current model should be re-evaluated.

An opportunity for further research exists in conducting a qualitative analysis of traditional and non-traditional enrollees' motivation for enrolling. Though this study determined differences, motivation factors were not accounted. Also, teachers' attitudes toward non-traditional enrollees should be researched in order to describe ways to encourage more active involvement of non-traditional enrollees. The issue of SAEs should also be further explored to determine if changes in the model are needed or if clarification of expectations through teacher pre-service and in-service is needed.

Implications

The reaction of Agricultural Educators to lack of FFA membership and declining Supervised Agricultural Experiences is to work harder at recruiting students and mandating these activities once students are enrolled. Trends over the last thirty years have indicated continued decreases in FFA membership and SAE involvement while total Agricultural Education enrollment has surged. The knee-jerk reaction of those closely associated to Agricultural Education might be to attack the “problem” with more stringent rules, regulations, and mandates. This study may force the profession to begin addressing fundamental questions about the Agricultural Education program. Questions include:

1. Does the current Agricultural Education Model reflect today’s Agricultural Education programs?
2. Is FFA and SAE involvement integral if only a small percentage of students participate in the full program?
3. How can pre-service Agriculture Education teachers best deal with the reality of declining FFA and SAE involvement?
4. How do teachers view the current Agricultural Education model and its integration into the total Agricultural Education program?
5. What is parents’ motivation for encouraging students to become involved?
6. Why do non-traditional and traditional Agricultural Education students enroll in subsequent years of Agricultural Education?

The profession may be better served if the “problems” associated with Agricultural Education are viewed as “opportunities.” The wake-up call may have arrived whereby serving ALL students’ needs becomes the focus.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
COVER LETTER



March 22, 1999

«First_Name» «Last_Name»
«School» Agriculture Instructor
«Address»
«City», «State» «Zip»

«title» «Last_Name»:

We are cooperating with Oklahoma State University in a study to help determine why students enroll in Agricultural Education courses. Of specific interest are those students who enter Agricultural Education programs for the first time as juniors or seniors. This study will help us learn more about the students in your program and reasons they chose to enroll in the courses offered at your school.

Your program has been selected to participate in this study because it is a multi-teacher program where unique courses are taught. You will be contacted to schedule a day for a staff member from Oklahoma State University to visit your program to administer a questionnaire to juniors and seniors enrolled in agricultural education courses at your school. The questionnaire will take approximately 7-10 minutes for your students to complete so class interruptions will be minimal.

Please also be assured that information will be confidential and results will only be reported as group data to protect the identity of all the schools involved. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Julie at (405) 744-6942. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

Eddie Smith
State Program Administer
Agricultural Education Division
Oklahoma Department of
Vocational & Technical Education

Julie Baggett
Doctoral Candidate
Oklahoma State University

1500 West Seventh Avenue
Stillwater, OK 74074-4364
(405) 377-2000

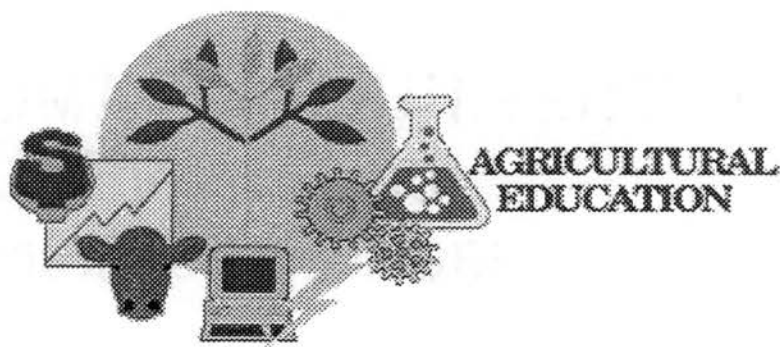
APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION STUDENT SURVEY

TO THE STUDENT:

YOUR SCHOOL HAS BEEN SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN A SPECIAL PROJECT. IN ORDER FOR OTHERS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOU, A SHORT QUESTIONNAIRE HAS BEEN SPECIALLY DEVELOPED. YOUR PARTICIPATION IN FILLING OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY. THE INFORMATION WILL BE USED TO INFORM OTHERS WHY YOU ARE ENROLLED IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION. YOU WILL NOT INCLUDE YOUR NAME OR OTHER IDENTIFYING INFORMATION ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE. YOU AND YOUR SCHOOL WILL REMAIN COMPLETELY ANONYMOUS.

PLEASE READ EACH QUESTION CAREFULLY AND ANSWER TRUTHFULLY. ONCE YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE QUESTIONNAIRE, PLEASE RAISE YOUR HAND SO IT MAY BE COLLECTED.



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION, COMMUNICATIONS, AND 4-H YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND NATURAL RESOURCES
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION STUDENT SURVEY

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

- 1) My gender is: Male
 Female
- 2) My Classification is: Junior
 Senior
- 3) In school, I usually make:
 A's
 A's & B's
 B's
 B's & C's
- C's
 C's & D's
 D's or Below
- 4) After I finish high school I plan to:
 Attend a vocational/technical or trade school.
 Attend a college or university.
- Enter the military.
 Obtain immediate employment.
- 5) I live:
 On a farm or ranch.
 In the country, but not on a farm
 or ranch.
- In a town of 1,000 people or less.
 In a city of over 1,000 people.
- 6) I plan to pursue a career related to this course.
 YES NO UNSURE
- 7) Check (✓) the activities in which you have participated during high school.
- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athletics
<input type="checkbox"/> Cheerleader
<input type="checkbox"/> Band or chorus
<input type="checkbox"/> Debate, drama
<input type="checkbox"/> School Newspaper/Yearbook
<input type="checkbox"/> Honor Club or Society
<input type="checkbox"/> Hobby Club such as
photography or crafts
<input type="checkbox"/> Language/Science Clubs
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Council or Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Church related groups
<input type="checkbox"/> Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts
<input type="checkbox"/> FFA
<input type="checkbox"/> 4-H
<input type="checkbox"/> FHA
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Vocational Clubs, DECA, VICA,
FBLA, HERO, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
|--|--|

COURSE INFORMATION:

- 8) I took my first agriculture course during my _____ school year:
 Senior Sophomore
 Junior Freshman or before
- 9) What is the name of the Agriculture course in which you are currently enrolled?

- 10) What other Agriculture courses have you completed?

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION:

- 11) Please read each statement carefully, then circle a response based on your feelings or attitudes. There are no right or wrong answers.

	I ENROLLED IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION BECAUSE.....	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I thought I would like this class	SA	A	U	D	SD
2.	I needed a science credit	SA	A	U	D	SD
3.	My counselor suggested I take the class	SA	A	U	D	SD
4.	I enjoyed being outside the classroom (greenhouse, barn, etc.)	SA	A	U	D	SD
5.	I thought this class would prepare me for a career in agriculture	SA	A	U	D	SD
6.	My brother(s)/sister(s) or other relatives suggested I take the class	SA	A	U	D	SD
7.	It was the only elective available	SA	A	U	D	SD
8.	I liked the teacher(s)	SA	A	U	D	SD
9.	I needed an elective class	SA	A	U	D	SD
10.	My parent(s) or guardian(s) suggested I take the class	SA	A	U	D	SD
11.	I was placed in this class by the people who do the scheduling	SA	A	U	D	SD
12.	The principal or other teacher suggested I take the class	SA	A	U	D	SD
13.	The name or description of the class sounded interesting to me	SA	A	U	D	SD
14.	The agriculture teacher(s) encouraged me to take the class	SA	A	U	D	SD
15.	My friends suggested I take the class	SA	A	U	D	SD
16.	I could be a member of the FFA	SA	A	U	D	SD
17.	I enjoyed working with animals	SA	A	U	D	SD
18.	Agriculture classes sounded fun	SA	A	U	D	SD
19.	I heard this class was easy	SA	A	U	D	SD
20.	I could learn things in this class that would be useful to me	SA	A	U	D	SD
21.	I wanted to participate in shows and fairs	SA	A	U	D	SD
22.	Some of my friends were in this class	SA	A	U	D	SD
23.	I could have a project and/or earn money through work experience	SA	A	U	D	SD
24.	I could learn how to do things rather than just learn out of a text	SA	A	U	D	SD
25.	My involvement in agriculture at home got me interested in this class	SA	A	U	D	SD

COURSE RELATED INFORMATION:

12) Do you have an SAE Project? YES NO UNSURE

◆ If YES, what is it? (Ex: raise market hogs, work in a florist shop, etc. Be Specific!)

◆ If YES, do you have a record book? YES NO UNSURE

13) Are you a member of the FFA? YES NO UNSURE

14) From the following list of FFA activities, please CHECK (✓) the activities in which you participated. If none, leave blank.

ACTIVITY	✓ PARTICIPATION
1. FFA Committee Member	
2. FFA Committee Chairperson	
3. FFA Community Activities (trash pick-up, concessions, etc.)	
4. FFA Chapter Banquet	
5. State FFA Convention	
6. National FFA Convention	
7. Made For Excellence Conference	
8. FFA Fundraising Activities	
9. FFA Field Trip	
10. FFA Alumni Camp	
11. FFA Chapter Officer	
12. FFA Livestock Shows/Fairs	
13. FFA Leadership/Speaking Contests	
14. FFA Judging Contests (Career Development Events)	
15. FFA Award Applications (Proficiencies, Degrees, etc.)	

15) In your own words, why are you enrolled in agricultural education?

APPENDIX C
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE: 02-25-99

IRB #: AG-99-019

**Proposal Title: A DESCRIPTION OF TRADITIONAL AND NON –
TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION ENROLLEES IN
OKLAHOMA BASED UPON POINT OF ENROLLMENT AND TENURE IN THE
PROGRAM**

Principal Investigator(s): Bill Weeks, Julie Baggett

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Signature:



Date: February 25, 1999

Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance
cc: Julie Baggett

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modification to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

VITA

Julie Fawn Baggett

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation: A COMPARISON OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION ENROLLEES
IN OKLAHOMA BASED UPON POINT OF ENROLLMENT AND
TENURE IN THE PROGRAM

Major Field: Agricultural Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Corpus Christi, Texas on December 22, 1970, the
daughter of James Foster Baggett and Beverly Anne Hovey.

Education: Graduated from Orange Grove High School in May 1989; received
Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Education from Texas A&M
University, College Station, Texas in May 1993; received Master of
Science degree in Agricultural Education from Texas A&M University,
College Station, Texas in August 1994. Completed Doctor of Philosophy
degree in Agricultural Education at Oklahoma State University in July
1999.

Professional Experience: Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of
Agricultural Education, Oklahoma State University, August 1997-May
1999; Teacher Intern, National FFA Organization, Alexandria, Virginia,
June-August 1997; High School Agriculture Science Instructor, Sinton
High School, Sinton, Texas, July 1994-June 1997; Graduate Teaching
Assistant, Department of Agricultural Education, Texas A&M University,
August 1993-May 1994.

Professional Memberships: Association of Career and Technology Education,
Oklahoma Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association, National
Association of Agricultural Educators, American Association for
Agricultural Education, Agricultural Education Graduate Student
Association.