

**PERCEPTIONS OF SELECTED AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION  
TEACHERS REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE,  
DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION  
OF HUMAN RELATIONS  
SKILLS**

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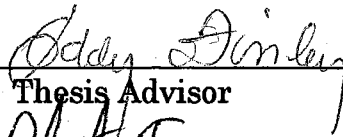
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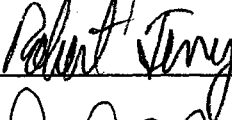
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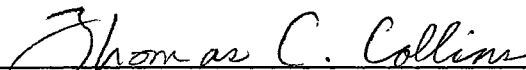
  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

"With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed. Consequently he who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions." Abraham Lincoln--August 21, 1858 (Phillips, 1992, pg. 38).

Lincoln's remarks in the first Lincoln-Douglas debate might well reflect the perilous conditions surrounding agricultural education today. Times change and perceptions change. Almost 400 years ago, colonists founded the beginnings of our great nation with the hard work and ingenuity of agriculturalists. For almost 300 years agriculture held the honored position of being the country's main economic base. By the 1930s the industrial revolution had reached into the heart of agriculture and started renovations that would completely change its face forever.

Farmers and ranchers today have lived through a period of evolution in agriculture. They have seen technology boost production beyond their wildest imaginations. They have witnessed the self-contained family farm evolve into a complex and often extremely risky business venture.

Along with the physical changes in output have come perceptual changes by the general public. As consumers have become more removed from production their vision of the benevolent farmer has changed. Often portrayed through the media and radical activist groups as the villain rather

than the provider, agriculturalists today have been accused of everything from destroying the environment to mass acts of cruelty to the very animals that help sustain their way of life. Communications between producers and consumers have broken down. The need for effective human relations skills by all agriculturalists is immanent.

In addition to problems on the home front, agricultural producers must learn to compete with an ever increasing international food and fiber market. American agricultural leaders have recognized the need to develop management and social skills to utilize the technology available more efficiently. New and continued policy reforms regarding agriculture have often been overlooked by our nation's lawmakers. Hence, human relations skills, creativity, and knowledge have become fundamental to building and sustaining American agriculture's competitive edge.

Because of the ever changing views of a public that is easily swayed by media propaganda, agricultural education has become more important than ever for the professional in agriculture, as well as the consumer, policy maker and business person. "I believe in the future of agriculture, with a faith born not of words, but of deeds..." (E. M. Tiffany, adopted at the 3rd National FFA Convention, 1930; revised at 63rd Convention). This line from the FFA creed summarized the heart of agricultural education for several generations. Educators now face a sea of skeptics and cynics who ask difficult and often disparaging questions. No longer do agricultural education teachers focus simply on production techniques, now they have come to realize they must also act as public relations persons for the entire industry, as well as their own programs.

The art and science of understanding human relations has always been difficult, sometimes impossible. Yet being able to trust and understand

those that fill our day-to-day lives has always been the key to success in any area. Agriculturalists must learn to trust those who seek different lifestyles. This is the first step to better communication. The burden of bringing understanding of the importance of agricultural practices to the public rests with those in the agricultural industry. Educators in this field must be prepared to embrace this task and lead the way to harmony between producers and consumers.

### Rationale for the Study

Due to the influence and impact of agricultural education teachers over their students combined with the fact that these students are projected to create a large percentage of the future agricultural leadership force, it appears prudent to determine the amount of human relations skills expertise current teachers have to pass on.

The projected impact of human relations abilities on the students of agricultural education teachers becomes more pronounced as our society evolves. Traditional home environments have seen drastic changes with the increased number of two working parents in the home, and/or the increased number of students from broken homes. Many of these students are searching for replacement role models.

Students retain 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, and 50% of what they see and hear (Donaldson and Scannell, 1986, p. 85). If this statement is true, then the actions of agricultural education teachers can greatly affect the development of their students. Having opportunity to spend more time than any other teacher with their

students, possibly more time than their parents spend with them, carries with it the responsibility of developing a well rounded individual. The development of an individual with inherent human relations abilities, based on interaction and witness of the skills possessed by the agricultural education teacher, is a primary goal of agricultural education.

### Statement of Problem

In addition to the heavy responsibility imposed on agricultural education teachers involving their influence over the development of well rounded students, additional uses for adequate human relations skills have continued to surface. Due to the ever-changing views of the American public toward agriculture and the need for agricultural education, human relations and communications skills have become necessary tools for agricultural educators. Agricultural education teachers today must contend with a skeptical public continually watching, questioning and even demanding justification for the existence of the high school agricultural education program. The ability to recognize and properly handle any questionable confrontation has become a great asset.

The problem investigated in this study was to determine whether or not agricultural education teachers were properly equipped for these challenges. The study sought to assess the importance and development of human relations skills of teachers as perceived by themselves. Results should serve as a source of information for both agricultural education teachers and the institutions that certify them for future training, revision and development.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess agricultural teachers' perceptions of their personal development and understanding of human relations skills in agricultural education. This study also attempted to discover if, in the five states identified, agricultural education teachers perceive they are equipped with enough human relations skills to function adequately in the communities they serve. In addition, the study also attempted to determine if continued or more in-depth educational opportunities should be provided for these teachers, to enhance their skills, on a regular basis.

## Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are presented as follows:

1. To determine the perceptions of a randomly selected representative sample of agricultural education teachers, from a five state area (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas), regarding the importance of specific human relations skills.
2. To determine agricultural education teachers' perceptions of the opportunity for development of human relations skills during their collegiate undergraduate experiences.
3. To determine the perceptions of agricultural education teachers concerning...
  - a. the most valuable human relations skill for agricultural education teachers;

b. the level of importance of motivational and leadership skills needed by agricultural education teachers;

c. the level of development of cooperation and professional etiquette skills achieved during undergraduate work;

d. the importance of conflict resolution skills needed by agricultural education teachers.

4. To determine if agricultural education teachers perceive they are equipped with sufficient human relations skills.

5. To determine perceptions as to whether continued or more in-depth educational opportunities should be provided for agricultural education teachers to enhance their existing skills.

### Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was inclusive of a proportional random sample representative of the total population of agricultural education teachers in a five state area (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas). The total population of this study included 2455 selected agricultural education teachers (Agricultural Educators Directory, 1992). The sample size of this study included 331 selected agricultural education teachers.

### Assumptions of the Study

For the purpose of the study, the following assumptions were accepted by the investigator:

1. The agricultural education teachers understood and/or comprehended the questions asked in the instrument.
2. The agricultural education teachers understood the meaning of human relations skills as applied to the study.
3. The perceptions expressed by the agricultural education teachers were honest articulations of their opinions.
4. The teachers completing the questionnaire were the actual addressees, or that the Agricultural Educators Directory (1992) was current and correct.

#### Definition of Terms

The ensuing definitions are presented as they apply to the study.

Human Relations Skills - those skills developed for the purpose of interacting positively with other people. Categories include: understanding self and others, motivation, leadership, cooperation, professional etiquette and conflict resolution.

Agricultural Education - refers to a vocational/occupational program administered in the public schools, designed to train young people for careers in agriculture or agricultural-related businesses and/or to prepare young people for advanced education in a college or university (Peper, 1988, pg. 6).

Agricultural Education Teacher - refers to one trained in the art and skill of education as it applies to agriculture, leadership and the FFA.

Motivation - the practical art of applying incentives and arousing interest toward the accomplishment of a desired achievement. It is the disposition to value learning as a worthwhile and satisfying activity, a

striving for knowledge and mastery in learning situations (Grossnickle, 1988, pg.7.).

Leadership - refers to the ability of an individual to influence those around him/her; that influence may be temporary or long lasting.

Leadership evolves through the willingness of an individual to make choices and accept responsibility for those choices in order to make things happen.

Cooperation - to act jointly with another or others toward a common goal. Cooperation aids in communication and increases sensitivity to the similarities, as well as, the differences of others, thereby creating an atmosphere more beneficial of the achievement of the goals of all parties.

Professional Etiquette - the forms prescribed by custom or authority to be observed in a professional setting; courtesies and behaviors exhibited by those educators considered thoughtful and effective.

Conflict Resolution - the ability to come to a common agreement between two or more conflicting parties to the mutual satisfaction and benefit of all concerned.

Animal Rights Movement - philosophy that goes beyond the promise of protecting the physical well-being of animals and seeks to establish that animals have inherent legal and ethical rights like those of humans (Pirtle, 1993).

Vegetarianism - the complete abolition of all types of meat and eggs from the diet.

Gay Rights Movement - total acceptance of homosexual individuals in all social and professional contexts.

Women's Rights Movement - equal treatment of men and women in the workplace and in all social settings.



**Minority Rights Movement** - equal treatment of all persons regardless of race in all social and professional settings.

**Environmental Movement** - attempt to make the general public aware of the delicacy and value of the natural environment and bring about legal protection of such.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of literature which the author deemed relevant to this study. This review of literature is divided into the following sections: 1) Introduction; 2) the Changing Face of American Agriculture; 3) Human Relations Skills; 4) Review of Related Research; and 5) Summary.

#### Introduction

Agricultural technology has advanced in America at such a pace producers can scarcely comprehend one set of improvements before additional advances are presented to them. The role of the agricultural education teacher has been not only that of an information giver, but perhaps, more importantly that of a facilitator between past and present. Agriculturalists have been forced to expand their realm of expertise to include areas of marketing, public relations and public education. No longer are agriculturalists isolated on the farm. Today, they are inducted into the main stream of society, and must interact positively there.

Agricultural education teachers are now responsible for the development and training of future agriculturalists' abilities to deal with the

general public. With a continuously shrinking portion of the voting population to support it, agriculture must reach out to its own population and enhance their abilities to relate to all of humankind. Therefore, it becomes imperative that the development of human relations skills is encouraged and refined within this sector.

Still the question recurs "can we do better?" The dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew (Phillips, 1992, pg. 137).

In his address to Congress in December of 1862, Lincoln pointed to the need for all to be aware of change and be ready to deal with it. Agricultural education teachers must take the initiative to develop their own human relations skills, in order to be able to pass those skills on to the next generation. Traditionally, seen as an area to be introduced to all and cultivated in only a select few, human relations skills now take on added dimension and scope. All agriculturalists must be able to communicate effectively with the general public in years to come.

The Oklahoma manual for teachers, Minimum Criteria for Effective Teaching Performance, was developed as a result of the Educational Improvement Act of 1985, House Bill 1466. The manual reflects the awareness of the Oklahoma Legislature to enhance the quality of education in the state. Section 16 of that bill provides steps for continued teacher improvement and increased educational quality by requiring a minimum of one evaluation per year. Teachers are required to provide a pleasant, safe and orderly climate conducive to learning. Other human relations skills are called on for the teacher to demonstrate adequate motivation in and out of the classroom. Student-teacher rapport is enhanced by communications skills

developed not only for the student-teacher relationship but also the parent-teacher relationship (House Bill 1466, 1985).

The need for enhanced human relations skills in all teachers was further recongized by the Oklahoma State Legislature through House Bill 2246. Section 4-1 of this bill addresses the teacher preparation system. This section of the bill specifies the following outcomes be included in the teacher preparation system:

- f. teachers shall have the ability to interact effectively with diverse students and overcome their own biases;
- g. teachers shall have an understanding of different cultures;
- h. teachers shall have skills necessary for working with parents as partners in the education process,
- i. teachers shall have skills necessary to involve the community in education; and
- j. teachers shall have the skills to foster teamwork within and among schools (House Bill 2246, 1991).

The human relations skills alluded to in House Bill 2246 were similar to the skills assessed in the questionnaire used in this study.

### The Changing Face of American Agriculture

American agriculture today is vastly different than what was known in 1900. From the first colonists that attempted to settle the eastern seaboard to the cattle barons of the late 1800s western plains, minimal advances were made in agriculture across the United States. Although the early industrial revolution had produced major technological advances in the field, few agriculturalists had completely embraced all the new equipment and concepts. Agriculture was the main economic base of the country and considered the heart of America.

As American agriculture emerged into a new century, no one could foresee the magnitude of the changes that would transpire over the next nine decades. Agriculture today is a complex industry. Agriculture today encompasses not only traditional producers, but also the entire food and fiber chain. The food and fiber system is today's counterpart of yesterday's farm-centered and farm-dominated economy (Department of Agriculture, 1990, pg. 2).

Along with changes in production, agricultural education has evolved into a program that far exceeds the simple parameters of production agriculture. The passage of the Morrill Act in 1862 set the stage for formal agricultural education. The establishment of federal funding for the support and maintenance of agricultural and mechanical colleges in each state reflected the importance policy makers placed on agriculture even in a time of great conflict and strife between the North and South (Committee on Agricultural Education in Secondary Schools, 1988).

Agricultural education gradually infiltrated the public school systems. By the early 1900s most high school curricula were characterized by an emphasis on the scientific nature of agriculture. In 1917 the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act, drastically changed the face of agricultural education. Vocational education was born and vocational agriculture developed a distinctive approach to instruction. A combination of traditional classroom instruction, hands-on experiences and individual entrepreneurship resulted in a system that taught both process and content (Committee on Agricultural Education in Secondary Schools, 1988).

In conjunction with the new agricultural education system came the founding of the Future Farmers of America in 1928. Through this vehicle educators were able to incorporate valuable instruction in economic, political

and civic leadership into their agricultural programs. Time revealed the great success of vocational agriculture and the FFA. Spreading across all fifty states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the District of Columbia, Guam, Rota and Saipan (Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands), Majuro (Marshall Islands), and Kosrae and Yap (Federal States of Micronesia), the current FFA membership roster reported 401,574 members; reflecting approximately 75% of students enrolled in agricultural education (National FFA Organization, 1993).

Agricultural educators today are challenged to provide their students direction in basic problem-solving skills, entrepreneurial development, practical application and understanding of scientific concepts and leadership and human relations skills. In the face of an industry changing more rapidly now than ever before, adequate development of these skills is mandatory to remain flexible and viable in the year 2000.

Paramount to any discussion of the means by which people of the world may experience more meaningful and productive lives is a more knowledgeable understanding of the role played, and the contributions made, by the industry of agriculture. Such understanding is needed not only by those engaged in work directly related to agriculture, but to all people of all nations.

Decisions made by every country regarding the allocation of resources to their agricultural industry need to be based upon accurate knowledge and understanding (Finley and Price, 1993, pg. 4).

Finley and Price acknowledge the need for agriculturalists both to understand their industry and to be able to communicate its value and uniqueness to others. As the world becomes smaller and Americans are forced to compete in a global market, the importance of human relations skills increases.

Even more so than in the past human skills, creativity, and knowledge will be fundamental to building and sustaining US. agriculture's competitive edge. Hence, the role of agricultural education today is more important than ever for the professional in agriculture as well as the consumer, policy maker, and business person (Committee on Agricultural Education in Secondary Schools, 1988, pg. 53).

Traditional agriculture has undergone and continues to undergo a revolution. Rapid advances in biotechnology and information technology continue to alter the structure of the American agricultural sector. Technology has created situations that must be acknowledged and dealt with. Surplus commodities, trends toward large industrialized farms and the need to maintain complex and costly new technology in order to remain competitive are but a few of the problems facing today's agriculturalists (Congress of United States, 1985).

In his opening statement to the U. S. Joint Economic Committee on April 24, 1989, Representative (and chairman of the committee) Lee H. Hamilton expressed the following opinions:

Agriculture continues to be a key factor in American trade. High farm program outlays in the past few years served a vital function in maintaining farmers. However, our current trade and budget deficits require that, while we continue to maintain exports, we must strive to keep future payments under control. In this regard, it is important that we assure that the future structure of American agriculture is one that allows us to achieve these goals (Congress of the United States, 1989).

In light of the fact that agriculturalists are an ever shrinking group of voters, effective communications and relations must be developed among agriculturalists, legislative representatives and the general voting populace. Human relations skills must be honed and future leaders and producers trained to keep the channels of communication open and viable.

## Human Relations Skills

Human relations skill is that skill developed for the purpose of interacting positively with other people. As the world relating to agriculture continues to become smaller, and American agriculturalists become global marketers, the need for effective human relations skills increases.

In a society that is as complex as ours, there is a need for people who have the ability, willingness, and skill to work together. If any group, even any nation, is to survive and progress, the people comprising it must work together in a harmonious manner (Gray and Gray, 1964, pg. 1).

Due to the complexity of the concept of human relations skills the researcher has divided them into six categories, including understanding self and others, motivation, leadership, cooperation, professional etiquette and conflict resolution.

### Understanding self and others

What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us (Oliver Wendell Holmes as cited by Covey, 1989, pg. 96).

Oliver Wendell Holmes provided great insight into the concept of understanding self. If agriculturalists are to be ambassadors to the general public for the necessity of their education in agriculture today, they must first understand why agriculture is important to them. If the ultimate goal is to develop true perception between both supporters and opponents of American agriculture, the first step must be to gain insight into the basic principles and philosophies of American agriculture.

Once a basic knowledge of agriculture has been developed, the next step is to understand the views of major opponents. Influence upon the



opinions of others can be very weak without proper understanding of their philosophy. Traditionally, agriculturalists have been an introverted group, preferring to remain within their own circle of comfort. As media and radical groups question and often attack basic agricultural practices, all levels of the agricultural chain, from producers to marketing specialists must gain insight to their opponents views to be effective in defending such practices.

It is important to note that agriculturalists must also cultivate an open-minded approach, being aware that the need for improvements may be indicated through a negative source. In his teachings of the martial arts, Miyamoto Musashi suggested to his pupils in 1643, "Unless you know the ways of other schools, you certainly cannot understand the way of my individual school" (Cleary, 1993, pg. 49). Musashi understood the importance of studying and understanding one's opponent.

### Motivation

Motivation is the practical art of applying incentives and arousing student and class interest toward inducing students to perform in a prescribed and desirable manner (Grossnickle, 1988). Realizing motivation is the key to all achievement, greatly enhances its level of importance to the agricultural educator.

Agricultural education teachers are the primary link between many of the future leaders of the agricultural industry. Therefore, motivation becomes a principal tool in the arsenal of teaching artillery. Teachers must not only be able to motivate themselves, but be able to inspire motivation in others. "Current research about school and teacher effectiveness, indicates that the influence of the teachers' own attitudes, motivation, expectations,

and viewpoint regarding their role in student motivation is a key factor in student achievement" (Grossnickle, 1988, pg. 1).

### Leadership

Leadership involves directing the actions, thoughts and opinions of others. It also means to instruct or teach (Stewart, 1978, pg. 6). Leaders are often instigators, they invite others to become involved in activity.

Agricultural education teachers could be called "invitational leaders". They make things happen within a community. Inviting both students and adults to become involved in agricultural events and industry. Invitational leaders begin with the end in mind (Covey, 1989, pg. 95). From Covey's description it could be surmised that agricultural teachers instigate involvement by those around them in order achieve pre-set goals. In order to be successful, agricultural educators must become proficient at influencing the choices of others.

What distinguishes humans from the animals is that, between stimulus and response, humankind has choices. Sometimes one must be prepared to live with negative consequences of choices. Even in the most dire circumstances, one always has choices (Novak, 1992, pg. 132).

### Cooperation

Cooperation is a shared agreement on goals and the value of working together for their attainment despite the presence of some antagonism or disagreement (Hare and Jandt, 1976, pg. 3). Agricultural education teachers must learn to develop synergistic relationships with other teachers to create well-rounded students. Likewise, they must instill in their pupils the importance of cooperative behavior. "Cooperation breeds cooperation..." (Deutsch, 1973, pg. 367), this phrase from Deutsch re-enforced the idea that

understanding and helpfulness are often reciprocal in nature. Educators must assume the responsibility of teaching cooperation.

### Professional Etiquette

Professional etiquette as defined in this study is a composite of the forms prescribed by custom or authority to be observed in a professional setting; courtesies and behaviors exhibited by those educators considered thoughtful and effective. This definition can be expanded to include students, parents, community supporters and, in fact, anyone an agriculturalist comes in contact with .

Emily Post, as quoted by Elizabeth L. Post (1984, pg. xiii), referred to etiquette in the first edition of her landmark book, published in 1922, as follows: Beneath its myriad rules, the fundamental purpose of etiquette is to make the world a pleasanter place to live in, and you a more pleasant person to live with. This simple viewpoint can be expanded to include both formal and casual protocol. Many students look to their agricultural education teacher as their main source of knowledge concerning both public and private behavior. This greatly elevates the responsibility level of the educator to understand all of the intricacies of professional etiquette.

### Conflict Resolution

Hare and Jandt define conflict as a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize; injure; or eliminate their rivals (Hare and Jandt, 1976, pg. 2). Conflict can take many forms, all of which are not bad. When controlled, conflict can serve as a vehicle for pent-up frustration. The key to positive

conflict is resolution. When cooperation is incorporated into conflict resolution, positive outcomes become more abundant.

The cooperative process of productive conflict resolution can be summarized in the following three steps:

1. It aids open and honest communication of relevant information between the participants.
2. It encourages the recognition of the legitimacy of the other's interests and of the necessity to search for a solution that is responsive to the needs of each side.
3. It leads to a trusting, friendly attitude, which increases sensitivity to similarities and common interests, while minimizing the salience of differences. It stimulates a convergence of beliefs and values. (Deutsch, 1973, pg. 363).

The challenge for agricultural education teachers is to embrace the concept of productive conflict resolution and pass that philosophy on to their students.

### Review of Related Research

Although a limited number of directly related studies were found, several studies reviewed were indirectly related to the present study. The most closely related study was conducted by Field (1986) concerning the importance of teaching human relations in agriculture. The study was done working with agricultural mechanization programs. The purpose of the study was to determine the level of importance placed on human relations competencies by graduates of the University of Nebraska's mechanized agriculture program. Questionnaires identifying four groups of 20 human relations competencies were mailed to 120 graduates. The respondents rated the competencies according to level of importance. The results of the study indicated that the graduates felt the human relations competencies were important to possess, and that no significant differences were found among

the competencies. Field recommended further research on the importance of human relations competencies in other agricultural program areas.

In 1989, Peper studied the extent of social skills development by vocational agriculture students/FFA members as perceived by selected vocational educators and public school superintendents. Using vocational educators in fields other than agriculture, both the educators and superintendents were selected from Oklahoma schools boasting nationally recognized gold, silver or bronze-rated FFA chapters.

Major findings of Peper's (1989) study indicated that both the vocational educators and the superintendents found the vocational agriculture students/FFA members to be "above average" for all categories within the areas of leadership, etiquette, citizenship, community service, and cooperation. This rating compare to a perceived level of "average" in other high school courses, such as English, math, history or science. Peper (1989) then concluded that social skills development is enhanced for vocational agriculture students/FFA members as more opportunities to develop those skills are available. In addition, she recommended the vocational agriculture instructors/FFA advisors should continue to help students develop their skills in the areas of leadership, etiquette, citizenship, community service, and cooperation.

Updyke (1971) conducted research involving the attitude changes of student teachers in agricultural education at New Mexico State University during student teaching. Based on the influence of the cooperating teachers, Updyke attempted to measure changes in attitude during the student teaching experience. The study was limited to the experiences of the 32 student teachers in the spring of 1971. The study also involved the use of pre-tests and post-tests.

Updyke (1971) concluded that there was definitely a change in attitude and the cooperating teacher did exert measurable influence over the student teachers. The author felt that further studies concerning attitude of student teachers covering the total vocational agriculture program should be made.

A study of attitudinal influences determining program emphases of beginning teachers of vocational agriculture was conducted by Pritchard (1970). The study was designed to investigate what item or level of educational experience is most influential in determining present attitudes toward program emphasis and what relationship did personality type have on attitude. Using the Spearman Rank Correlation coefficient, a few significant correlations were found to exist. However, a grouping of teacher correlational profiles yielded some relevant information. Those teachers exhibiting total negative correlational profiles were considerably more open-minded than those with total positive correlational profiles. Due to the lack of conclusive findings it would appear further research concerning teacher personality and attitude would be relevant.

The basis for several of the preceding studies came from a study by Wiggins in 1968. Wiggins reviewed attitudinal changes of student teachers in agricultural education. The study was designed to investigate the attitudes of student teachers toward participation in FFA activities before and after student teaching. Wiggins (1968) concluded student teachers exposed to a higher level of participation rated the importance of FFA activity participation higher.

In a study again involving student teacher attitudes, Smith (1977) compared attitudes toward the vocational agriculture basic core curriculum before and after the student teaching experience. Smith found that the 51

student teachers at OSU, during the fall and spring semesters of 1976-77, felt that the core curriculum was an adequate teaching instrument. In addition, the student teachers agreed that motivation was an integral part of teaching.

An unsuccessful attempt was made to collect research materials concerning leadership abilities gained by students in the pre-laboratory section of student teaching training. In consideration of this the researcher depended on similar studies relating to high school students and leadership.

### Summary

In relation to the selected material covered in the literature review, it becomes apparent that teacher attitude, as well as ability, is paramount to the success of the program.

Teaching is a collaborative process, involving exchanges, outgoings, and interaction between two separate and independent centres of consciousness, and converging on to some objective and accessible reality...(Paterson, 1979, pg. 172).

The relative importance of the literature review in this study is its direct relationship to the theory that the agricultural education teacher's attitude, concern and initiative reflect the success of the agricultural education program. The educator's ability to react positively in all areas of human relations is a principal factor in the development of the complete student.

The understanding self and others section clarified the key issue of the knowledge that by accepting other's viewpoints one is better prepared to have positive interaction with them. In addition, to have a thorough

comprehending of one's own beliefs and ideologies greatly enhances the ability to negotiate with any opponent.

Motivation, perceived as the key to all achievement, must be a principal tool used regularly by effective teachers. Grossnickle (1988) verified this when referring to recent research concerning teacher effectiveness. His view of motivation as a practical art instigated the awareness of the importance of daily motivation.

Invitational leadership was the direction Covey (1989) touted as most effective. As leaders in the community, the responsibility of involving others in agricultural activities rests solely with the agricultural education teacher. Influencing the choices of others, setting goals and inviting others to become involved were the three main suggestions Covey made in order to develop effective leadership.

Cooperation enlarged its area of relevance as Deutch (1973) noted that understanding and helpfulness are often reciprocative in nature. The need for synergistic relationships among teachers became most evident when described in the context of a well-rounded student.

Making the world a pleasanter place and you a more pleasant person, seemed to be a simplistic definition of etiquette by Emily Post (Post, 1984). However, as agricultural educators' strive to fit students and producers into an ever-changing global market, professional etiquette has become instrumental in the success of that task. It was made clear by this review that etiquette often involves the simplest acts of courtesy and thoughtfulness.

The summarization of Deutch's (1973) three steps to productive conflict resolution provided the reader with an awareness that the complexities of conflict can be overcome through simple cooperation and



willingness to listen to others. It should be noted that conflict is not all bad, and when controlled can have very positive outcomes.

Although the related research was more indirectly than directly connected to the study, it provided further insight into the need of such research. Peper (1989) developed information concerning social skill development in high school students. Field (1986) conducted research on the importance of human relations skills developed by agricultural mechanization graduates in finding and maintaining employment.

Updyke (1971), Pritchard (1970), and Wiggins (1968) all conducted attitudinal studies concerning student teachers and the effects of some phase of the student teaching experience. These studies reflected the student teachers' change of perception and position in regards to agricultural education policies as influenced by their student teaching experience.

The overriding similarities of all the literature reviewed were the influence and effect of human relations skills on the development of the agricultural education teacher. Either by having adequate exposure to the human relations skills noted, or the lack of exposure to those thereof, current educators have created an image of what they believe an agricultural education teacher should be. Determining the perceptions of these agricultural education teachers surveyed should provide insight into the general perceptions of human relations skills development by all agricultural educators within the five states selected.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methods and procedures used to conduct this study. The primary purpose of this study was to assess agricultural education teachers' perceptions of their personal development and understanding of human relations skills in agricultural education. This study also attempted to discover if, in the five states identified, agricultural education teachers perceive they are equipped with enough human relations skills to function adequately in the communities they serve. In addition, the study attempted to determine if continued or more in-depth educational opportunities should be provided for these teachers to enhance their skills on a regular basis.

In order to accomplish the purpose and objectives of this study, it was necessary to comply with behavioral research regulations, to determine the population and to develop an instrument which would provide the needed information. Data collection procedure and the methods to be used in analyzing the data were chosen. The data for this study were collected during the months of November and December, 1993.

## **Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

Oklahoma State University (OSU) policy and federal regulations require review and approval of all research studies that involve human subjects before investigators can begin their research. This review, directed by the Oklahoma State University Research Services and the IRB, is conducted 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 proceed. This research was assigned the following research project number: AG-94-008. Verification of the IRB approval is presented at the end of this document.

## **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are presented as follows:

1. To determine the perceptions of a randomly selected representative sample of agricultural education teachers, from a five state area (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas), regarding the importance of specific human relations skills.
2. To determine agricultural education teachers' perceptions of the opportunity for development of human relations skills during their collegiate undergraduate experiences.
3. To determine the perceptions of agricultural education teachers concerning...

- a. the most valuable human relations skill for agricultural education teachers;
  - b. the level of importance of motivational and leadership skills needed by agricultural education teachers;
  - c. the level of development of cooperation and professional etiquette skills achieved during undergraduate work;
  - d. the importance of conflict resolution skills needed by agricultural education teachers.
4. To determine if agricultural education teachers perceive they are equipped with sufficient human relations skills.
  5. To determine perceptions as to whether continued or more in-depth educational opportunities should be provided for agricultural education teachers to enhance their existing skills.

### The Population

A stratified proportional sample of certified agricultural education teachers was randomly selected from a five state region. The five states were chosen in order to provide a more inclusive sample of the central-southern region. Due to the wide variation in numbers of teachers in each state in the study, the investigator realized a stratified proportional sample would provide a more accurate picture of the perceptions of the teachers of this region.

Using the *Table for Determining Needed Size of a Randomly Chosen Sample From a Given Finite Population of Cases Such that the Sample Proportion will be Within  $\pm .05$  of the Population Proportion with a 95*

*Percent Level of Confidence* (Krejcie, R. V. and Morgan, D. W., 1970, p.607-610), the researcher used 2400 as a population base. Referring to Krejcie and Morgan's table it was determined that 331 agricultural education teachers would comprise the sample needed. That translated into 37 teachers from Arkansas, 33 teachers from Louisiana, 10 teachers from New Mexico, 48 teachers from Oklahoma and 203 teachers from Texas to comprise the total of 331 to be surveyed and included in this study.

Table I indicates the distribution of respondents by state.

**TABLE I**

**FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS'  
CURRENT TEACHING LOCATION BY STATE**

State	Frequency Distribution			
	Questionnaires mailed		Questionnaires returned	
	N	%	n	%
Arkansas	37	11.2	17	9.77
Louisiana	33	10.0	21	12.07
New Mexico	10	3.1	8	4.60
Oklahoma	48	14.4	27	15.52
Texas	203	61.3	101	58.05
<b>Total</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Note: total respondents 52.56 percent of questionnaires mailed.

Proportional sampling procedures dictated the following number of teachers to be selected from each state. A total of 264 agricultural education teachers in Arkansas represented 11.2% of the total 2,357 agricultural education teachers in the region. Louisiana with 235 teachers comprised 10.0% of the agricultural education teacher population. On the other hand, New Mexico, with only 73 teachers statewide, comprised 3.1% of the total . Oklahoma boasts 340 agricultural education teachers, representing 14.4% of the population surveyed. The overwhelming majority of questionnaires was sent to Texas, with 1,445 agricultural education teachers comprising 61.3% of the population studied.

Of the 331 questionnaires mailed 174 were returned completed, allowing for 52.56 percent of the original mailing. Looking at the 174 as 100 percent of the returned questionnaires, the individual breakdown of state by state returns were as follows: Arkansas 17 (9.77%), Louisiana 21 (12.07%), New Mexico 8 (4.60%), Oklahoma 27 (15.52%), and Texas 101 (58.05%).

### Selection and Development of the Instrument

In preparing the instrument (refer to Appendix A) to meet the objectives of the study, the first step was to review and evaluate instruments used in related studies. Those specifically reviewed included those developed by Peper (1988), Field (1986), Updyke (1967) and Wiggins (1968).

Upon analysis of the various methods of data retrieval, the mailed questionnaire was determined the most appropriate to meet the study objectives. Due to the vast geographical area represented both personal

interviews and telephone surveys were deemed unfeasible and too expensive to implement.

Upon completion of the review of selected questionnaires, the investigator and thesis advisor compiled and revised questions until a satisfactory set was developed. These questions were related to human relations skills development.

Once the initial set of questions was developed and ready for critical review, the instrument was viewed by a panel of experts. Faculty members from the Agricultural Education Department and the Animal Science Department in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at Oklahoma State University critiqued the instrument and offered suggested revisions. Appropriate revisions were made and the instrument was completed for mailing.

Despite the most diligent effort on the part of any researcher in designing a questionnaire, it is recognized that a number of respondents will fail to return the instrument received in the initial mailing. Therefore, in an effort to address this problem, the individual instruments were coded so that a follow-up mailing could be conducted. Only the researcher had access to these codes for use in tracking follow-up mailing recipients. After the second mailing the code sheets were destroyed.

Throughout the process of development, the length of the questionnaire was a concern. By structuring the instrument to take less than ten minutes to complete, the investigator felt that more agricultural education teachers would be willing to finish it. It was also determined between the investigator and thesis advisor to send the questionnaire in booklet form, thereby adding to the ease of review on the part of the respondent. It was a major concern during the development of the

instrument that it be easily read and include pertinent questions, as well as, be practically designed in terms of respondents' review time.

To collect pertinent data concerning the perceptions of agricultural education teachers in five states toward their human relations skills acquired in order to function adequately in the communities they serve and the possible need of additional training, were the primary goals of the instrument. A combination of four open-ended questions, one yes or no question, three demographic questions, with the remaining questions being forced choice formed the bulk of the questionnaire. Five sections were developed and refined in the instrument. The first four sections included only forced choice questions relating to specific areas of human relations skills. Specific factors were addressed in each of the following human relations areas: (1) understanding self and others, (2) motivation, (3) leadership and cooperation, and (4) professional etiquette and conflict resolution.

The final section of general perception questions included the open-ended and demographic questions. It also included four forced-choice questions concerning the value of human relations skills in agricultural education and the degree of expertise in these areas developed during their own educational experience.

The investigator's thesis advisor reviewed each draft of the instrument, and after each review revisions were made. Upon completion of the original development process the instrument was reviewed by a panel of experts. Additional revisions were instated based on the suggestions of the experts, thereby clarifying and strengthening the instrument.



## Collection of Data

Upon completion of the revisions process, the instrument was perceived ready for mailing to the selected agricultural teachers. Packets were developed including the questionnaire, a cover letter (refer to appendix B) explaining the purpose of the research effort, a self-addressed, stamped return envelope. The return envelopes were coded so that, if necessary, follow-up letters could be sent. A packet was mailed November 1, 1993 to each member of the population of the study. The respondents were allowed discretion in regard to response to any or all of the questions on the instrument. Voluntary response was a key factor in the design of the study.

Due to the direct conflict with the Thanksgiving Holidays, a second mailing was delayed until Wednesday, December 1, 1993. At that time a follow-up letter (refer to Appendix C), encouraging those who had not yet returned the initial instrument to respond, was mailed to each of the non-respondents.

## Analysis of Data

"Descriptive statistics are numbers which are used to describe information or data, or those techniques used to calculate those numbers." (Key, 1993, pg. 172). Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the data collected from the questionnaire. Realizing frequency distribution includes numbers and percents, mean scores were also used to interpret the data.

Information concerning the perceptions of human relations skills development by agricultural education teachers in relation to both their personal and institutional growth (especially as related to the specific areas

of understanding self and others, motivation, leadership and cooperation, and professional etiquette and conflict resolution) was gleaned from the instrument. Sections A through D on the questionnaire contained three scale-type categories for the respondent to rate specific questions relating to the aforementioned specific areas. Variable choices were either (1) very important, important, somewhat important, not important, (2) agree totally, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, disagree totally, or (3) well above average, above average, average, below average, well below average.

The four point "Likert-type" scale of categories used allowed selected agricultural education teachers to rate their perceptions of human relations skills development in relation to specific questions in the questionnaire. Numerical values were assigned to aid in clarification and determine unified levels of importance of each category of response: not important = 1; somewhat important = 2; important = 3; very important = 4. Real limits were set at 1.0 to 1.49 for not important; 1.50 to 2.49 for somewhat important; 2.50 to 3.49 for important; and 3.50 to 4.0 for very important. Likewise, for the other four point scale values were: disagree totally = 1; disagree somewhat = 2; agree somewhat = 3; agree totally = 4. Real limits for these categories were: 1 to 1.49 for disagree totally; 1.50-2.49 for disagree somewhat; 2.50 to 3.49 for agree somewhat; 3.50 to 4.0 for agree totally.

A five point "Likert-type" scale was used to rate perceptions of agricultural education teachers concerning leadership, cooperation and professional etiquette, as well as, general perceptions about human relations skills development in college. Again numerical values were assigned: well below average = 1; below average = 2; average = 3; above average = 4; and well above average = 5. Real limits for this scale were: 1 to 1.49 for well

below average; 1.50 to 2.49 for below average; 2.50 to 3.49 for average; 3.50 to 4.49 for above average; and, 4.50 to 5.0 for well above average.

One yes or no question was included concerning attitudes toward the incorporation of human relations skills into an agricultural education teaching methods course. In addition, three demographic questions were included concerning number of years taught, college of certification, and state currently teaching in.

Four open-ended questions were also included. Two were directed toward each individual's idea of the most important human relations skill developed by agricultural education teachers, and one reason human relations skills are/are not important. The remaining open-ended questions addressed personal reaction to social movements and any effects on behavior toward students connected with those movements.

The analysis of data was completed by the Oklahoma State University Computer Center under the specific direction of Iris McPherson. All data were processed through the SAS System on an IBM model 3090 computer in order to obtain descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, frequency distributions and mean of means.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this chapter is to report the results from the mailed questionnaire used to conduct this study. The primary intent of this study was to assess agricultural education teachers' perceptions of their personal development and understanding of human relations skills in agricultural education. This study also attempted to discover if, in the five states identified, agricultural education teachers (hereafter referred to as teachers) perceive they are equipped with enough human relations skills to function adequately in the communities they serve. In addition, the study attempted to determine if continued or more in-depth educational opportunities should be provided for these teachers to enhance their skills on a regular basis.

The scope of the study included a proportional random sample representative of the total population of agricultural education teachers in a five state area (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas). The total population of the study included 331 selected teachers. Of the 331 respondents in the population, 174 responded to the mailed questionnaire, or 52.56 percent. The total usable responses included 17 Arkansas teachers for 5.13 percent of the total population (45.94 percent of the Arkansas teachers surveyed), 21 Louisiana teachers for 6.34 percent of the total population (63.63 percent of the Louisiana teachers surveyed), 8 New Mexico

teachers reflecting 2.41 percent of the total population (80.00 percent of the New Mexico population surveyed), 27 Oklahoma teachers representing 8.15 percent of the population (56.25 percent of the Oklahoma teachers surveyed), and 101 Texas teachers for 30.51 of the total population (49.75 percent of the Texas teachers surveyed). Their usable responses are reported in the following tables.

Table II presents the mean number of years and standard deviation taught by the respondents. The mean number of years was 15.15 with a standard deviation of 8.53.

**TABLE II**

**MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF  
YEARS OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION  
TAUGHT BY RESPONDENTS**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Years taught agricultural education	15.15	8.53

Range: 1 year--36 years

Table III contains the distribution of the respondents by higher education institution attended. The largest group, 28 (16.1 percent) had attended Oklahoma State University. East Texas State University graduates comprised the next largest group, 19 (10.9 percent). Seventeen respondents each (9.8 percent) had completed their work at Texas Tech University and Sam Houston State University. Texas A & M, Tarleton State University and

the University of Southwestern Louisiana had similar numbers of graduates participating in the study with 15 (8.6 percent), 14 (8.0 percent) and 13 (7.5 percent) respectively. Respondents graduating from the University of Arkansas totaled 10 (5.7 percent), while 8 (4.6 percent) had studied at Louisiana State University. Respondents graduating from Southwest Texas State University, Arkansas State University, Eastern New Mexico University and Prairie View A & M University totaled 4 (2.3 percent), 3 (1.7 percent), 2 (1.2 percent) and 2 (1.2 percent) respectively. Louisiana Tech University, Southern Arkansas University, Panhandle State University and Cameron University each had one graduate (0.6 percent) who responded to the instrument.

The information obtained from the instrument was analyzed based on a four-point "Likert-type" scale assigned to the questions in the areas of understanding self and others, motivation, conflict resolution and the importance of human relations skills to agricultural education teachers. The response categories in each of these areas were assigned the following numerical values: not important = 1; somewhat important = 2; important = 3; and, agree totally = 4. Real limits were set at 1.0 to 1.49 for not important; 1.50 to 2.49 for somewhat important; 2.50 to 3.49 for important; and 3.50 to 4.00 for very important.

Another four-point "Likert-type" scale was assigned to the question concerning areas of social movements. The information obtained from the instrument was analyzed based on this scale. The response categories were assigned the following numerical values: disagree totally = 1; disagree somewhat = 2; agree somewhat = 3; and agree totally = 4. Real limits were set at 1.0 to 1.49 for disagree totally; 1.50 to 2.49 for disagree somewhat; 2.50 to 3.49 for agree somewhat; and 3.50 to 4.00 for agree totally.

TABLE III

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS  
BY UNIVERSITY ATTENDED

University	Frequency Distribution of Respondents	
	N = 174	
	n	%
Oklahoma State University	28	16.1
East Texas State University	19	10.9
Texas Tech University	17	9.8
Sam Houston State University	17	9.8
Texas A & M University	15	8.6
Tarleton State University	14	8.0
University of Southwestern Louisiana	13	7.5
University of Arkansas	10	5.7
Louisiana State University	8	4.6
New Mexico State University	6	3.4
Stephen F. Austin University	6	3.4
Texas A & I University	6	3.4
Southwest Texas State University	4	2.3
Arkansas State University	3	1.7
Eastern New Mexico University	2	1.2
Prairie View A & M University	2	1.2
Louisiana Tech University	1	0.6
Southern Arkansas University	1	0.6
Panhandle State University	1	0.6
Cameron University	1	0.6

The information obtained from the instrument was analyzed based on a five-point "Likert-type" scale assigned to the questions concerning areas of leadership, cooperation, and professional etiquette. The response categories in each of these areas were assigned the following numerical values: well below average = 1; below average = 2; average = 3; above average = 4; and well above average = 5. Real limits were set at 1.00 to 1.49 for well below average; 1.50 to 2.49 for below average; 2.50 to 3.49 for average; 3.50 to 4.49 for above average; and 4.50 to 5.00 for well above average. These same numerical values and real limits were used to analyze the data from questions concerning the location of human relations skill development and the opportunities offered for development in college.

One question concerning the respondents' perception of whether or not to teach human relations skills in an agricultural education methods course was analyzed based on a simple yes or no method.

Four questions concerning varied opinions related to human relations skills were open-ended. The responses to these questions can be found in Appendices D through G. These questions were as follows: E-6. "What is the most important human relations skill developed by agricultural education teachers?"; E-7. "What one reason do you believe the development of human relations skills to be important/unimportant?"; E-8. "How do your personal feelings towards social movements (i.e., animals rights, minority rights) affect your performance in the classroom?"; E-9. "If you had a student whose parent(s) were active member(s) of an animal rights group, how would it effect the way you treat the student in and out of class?".

Responses to the demographic questions concerning the agricultural teachers length of service, current teaching location, and college attended were grouped by frequency and percentages in each category were calculated.



As summarized as Table IV, the respondents indicated that each of the human relations abilities/personal attributes about which they were quizzed was "very important" on the average. Assume Responsibility was the highest rated item, with a mean response of 3.92. Make Decisions on the Job followed closely with a 3.86. Next in line, with a 3.82 mean response, was Display Positive Attitude. The group rated Cope with Stress as the next most important item as indicated by the 3.78 mean response. Learn Through Mistakes and Establish an Effective Relationship with Supervisors were assigned mean responses of 3.67 and 3.64 respectively and were the next in order of importance as viewed by the teachers responding. The two lowest rated of the abilities/attributes, Accept Constructive Criticism and Establish Effective Relationships with Fellow Teachers and Staff were assessed quite similarly with 3.56 and 3.55 respective mean responses; however, as noted previously, these and all others were categorized as "very important".

Still within the area of Human Relations Abilities/Personal Attributes, the respondents were asked to rate the importance of three additional items. As reported in Table V, they indicated by a mean response of 3.30, that they considered it "important" for an agricultural education teacher to know that the stronger a person feels about an issue the more likely they will do something about it. As shown in Table V, respondents indicated it was "very important" for an agricultural education teacher to know the value of good relations with the public. This received a mean of 3.73. In the same area, respondents rated the importance of agricultural education teachers' recognizing the need to be accepted by co-workers the "important" level ( $x = 3.16$ ). For all three of these questions only two of the 174 respondents chose not to answer.

**TABLE IV**

**RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING HUMAN RELATIONS ABILITIES AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES**

Abilities & Attributes	Distribution Frequency by Response Category										Mean X	Standard Deviation SD	Interpretation
	Very Important		Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important		Total				
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	*N	%			
assume responsibility	161	92.53	13	7.47	0	0.00	0	0.00	174	100.00	3.92	0.26	Very Important
display positive attitude	143	82.18	31	17.82	0	0.00	0	0.00	174	100.00	3.82	0.38	Very Important
make decisions on the job	150	86.21	24	13.79	0	0.00	0	0.00	174	100.00	3.86	0.34	Very Important
cope with stress	138	79.31	34	19.54	2	1.15	0	0.00	174	100.00	3.78	0.44	Very Important
learn through mistakes	122	70.11	48	27.59	4	2.30	0	0.00	174	100.00	3.67	0.51	Very Important
accept constructive criticism	104	60.12	64	36.99	4	2.31	1	0.58	173	100.00	3.56	0.57	Very Important
establish effective relationship with fellow teachers and staff	102	58.62	67	38.51	4	2.30	1	0.57	174	100.00	3.55	0.57	Very Important
establish effective relationship with supervisor	115	66.09	56	32.18	3	1.72	0	0.00	174	100.00	3.64	0.51	Very Important

\*N varies as not all respondents chose to respond to all questions.

As another means of assessing agricultural education teachers' understanding of self and others, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with certain social movements. The results of this effort are reported in Table VI. The highest levels of agreement were determined for the Women's Rights Movement and for the Environmental Movement. These two items drew respective mean responses of 2.61 and 2.92, both of which were categorized as "agree somewhat". Although both mean responses were in the same category, it can be seen that respondents reacted more favorably to the Environmental Movement. The group, on the average, indicated a "disagree somewhat" reaction to the other social movements included in the list. The lowest mean response was recorded for the Gay Rights Movement, this being 1.23. A mean response of 2.41, which approached the "agree somewhat" category, was calculated as the teacher respondents' extent of agreement with the Minority Rights Movement. Respective mean extent of agreement responses to the Animal Rights Movement and Vegetarianism were 1.90 and 1.73.

Related to motivation, teachers were asked questions in two categories. First, they were asked to respond to questions involving the importance of teachers having certain abilities in motivation, and secondly to those that sought perceptions relating to how important it is to understand how selected factors affect motivation. As reported in Table VII, when asked how important it was for an agricultural education teacher to be able to "motivate yourself", teachers perceived this to be "very important" as evidenced by a mean response of 3.81. In response to "How important is it for you to motivate students?", as a group, the respondents indicated it was "very important", with a mean of 3.84. Also reported in Table VII, are the data collected in response to the query, "How important is it to be able to use

**TABLE V**

**RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL FEELINGS ON ISSUES,  
PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ACCEPTANCE BY CO-WORKERS**

How important is it for you as an agricultural education teacher to know...	<b>Distribution by Response Category</b>												Interpretation
	Very Important		Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important		Total		Mean	Standard Deviation	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	*N	%	X	SD	
that the stronger a person feels about an issue the more likely they will do something about it?	71	41.28	83	48.26	18	10.47	0	0.00	172	100.00	3.30	0.65	Very Important
the importance of good relations with the public?	128	74.42	43	25.00	1	0.58	0	0.00	172	100.00	3.73	0.45	Very Important
the need to be accepted by co-workers?	52	30.23	98	56.98	21	12.21	1	0.58	172	100.00	3.16	0.64	Important

\*N varies as not all respondents chose to respond to all questions.

**TABLE VI**  
**EXTENT OF RESPONDENTS' AGREEMENT REGARDING**  
**CERTAIN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

SOCIAL MOVEMENT	Distribution by Response Category												
	Agree Totally		Agree Somewhat		Disagree Somewhat		Disagree Totally		Total		Mean	Deviation	Interpretation
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	*N	%	X	SD	
animal rights movement	2	1.18	40	23.53	68	40.00	60	35.29	170	100.00	1.90	0.79	Disagree Somewhat
vegetarianism	1	0.58	24	14.04	75	43.86	71	41.52	171	100.00	1.73	0.71	Disagree Somewhat
gay rights movement	2	1.17	8	4.68	19	11.11	142	83.04	171	100.00	1.23	0.58	Disagree Somewhat
women's rights movement	18	10.71	83	49.40	51	30.36	16	9.52	168	100.00	2.61	0.80	Agree Somewhat
minority rights movement	12	7.02	68	39.77	70	40.94	21	12.28	171	100.00	2.41	0.79	Disagree Somewhat
environmental movement	27	15.88	106	62.35	34	20.00	3	1.76	170	100.00	2.92	0.65	Agree Somewhat

\*N varies as not all respondents chose to respond to all questions.

motivational techniques?". This received a 3.66 mean response which translated to "very important".

Table VIII displayed the responses to questions involving the effect of attitude on motivation. When asked, "How important it is for you as an agricultural education teacher to understand the effect of a positive attitude on a person's motivation?", respondents indicated it was "very important" ( $x = 3.67$ ). One hundred and seventy two responses were received for this question. When asked, "How important is it for you as an agricultural education teacher to understand the effect of a negative attitude on a person's motivation?", respondents indicated it was "very important" ( $x = 3.58$ ). Again, 172 responded to this question. Also seen in Table VIII, 172 respondents indication it was "very important" ( $x = 3.51$ ) to understand the influence of stress on motivation.

Respondents' perceptions regarding the development of leadership and cooperation skills are reported in Table IX. When asked, "To what extent do agricultural education graduates develop their leadership skills?", 172 teachers rated their development "above average" ( $x = 4.26$ ). When asked, "To what extent do agricultural education graduates develop a sense of pride?", respondents indicated "above average" ( $x = 4.15$ ). Only two of the 174 total respondents failed to answer this question. The extent of development by agricultural education graduates of self-initiative was rated "above average" ( $x = 4.08$ ). This question was rated by 171 of the teachers.

**TABLE VII**

**RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE  
OF CERTAIN TEACHER ABILITIES  
REGARDING MOTIVATION**

Teacher Abilities	Distribution by Response Category												
	Very Important		Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important		Total		Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	*N	%	X	SD	
motivate yourself	140	81.40	32	18.60	0	0.00	0	0.00	172	100.00	3.81	0.39	Very Important
motivate students	146	84.88	26	15.12	0	0.00	0	0.00	172	100.00	3.84	0.35	Very Important
use motivational techniques	116	67.44	55	31.98	1	0.58	0	0.00	172	100.00	3.66	0.48	Very Important

\*N varies as not all respondents chose to respond to all questions.

**TABLE VIII**

**RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE  
OF TEACHER UNDERSTANDING OF SELECTED  
FACTORS AFFECTING MOTIVATION**

Factors Affecting Motivation	Distribution by Response Category												Standard Deviation	Interpretation
	Very Important		Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important		Total		Mean			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	*N	%	X	SD		
the effect of a positive attitude on a person's motivation	117	68.02	54	31.40	1	0.58	0	0.00	172	100.00	3.67	0.48	Very Important	
the effect of a negative attitude on a person's motivation	106	61.63	61	35.47	5	2.91	0	0.00	172	100.00	3.58	0.54	Very Important	
the influence of stress on motivation	93	54.07	74	43.02	5	2.91	0	0.00	172	100.00	3.51	0.55	Very Important	

\*N varies as not all respondents chose to respond to all questions.



When asked, "To what extent do agricultural education graduates develop the ability to set priorities?", 172 respondents indicated a response of "above average" with a mean of 3.94. Development of the ability to manage their time by agricultural education graduates, was perceived to be "above average" ( $x = 3.79$ ). One hundred seventy-two of the respondents answered this question. When asked about the development, by agriculture education graduates, of the ability to act as spokesperson, the response was "above average" ( $x = 4.08$ ). Three persons failed to respond to this question. Finally, in Table IX, the response to the extent of agricultural education graduates to develop the ability to live up to the expectation of others was "above average" ( $x = 3.88$ ). One hundred seventy-one respondents answered this question.

Also in the area of Leadership and Cooperation, but under the category of specific skill development, are the results seen in Table X. When asked, "To what extent did you develop the ability to work with others during your undergraduate studies in agricultural education?", respondents indicated their response to be "above average" ( $x = 3.83$ ). One hundred and seventy-three respondents answered this question. Also in Table X, respondents reflected a response of "above average" ( $x = 3.60$ ), to the question "To what extent did you develop patience during your undergraduate agricultural education studies?". One hundred seventy-two respondents answered both this and the following question. "To what extent did you develop good attendance practices during their undergraduate studies in agricultural education?", the respondents indicated these practices were developed "well above average" ( $x = 4.23$ ). Finally, in Table X, the reflection of agricultural education teachers' ability to delegate work responsibilities as developed during undergraduate studies was "above average" ( $x = 3.54$ ). All 174 respondents answered this question.

**TABLE IX**

**RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
THE EXTENT TO WHICH AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION TEACHERS  
DEVELOP SELECTED LEADERSHIP AND COOPERATION SKILLS**

Leadership & Cooperation Skills	Distribution of Extent of Development												Mean X	Standard Deviation SD	Interpretat
	Well above Average		Above Average		Average		Below Average		Well below Average		Total				
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	*N	%			
their leadership skills	69	40.12	79	45.93	24	13.95	0	0.00	0	0.00	172	100.00	4.26	0.68	Above Average
a sense of pride	51	29.65	97	56.40	23	13.37	1	0.58	0	0.00	172	100.00	4.15	0.65	Above Average
self-initiative	51	29.82	85	49.71	33	19.30	2	1.17	0	0.00	171	100.00	4.08	0.73	Above Average
the ability to set priorities	37	21.51	91	52.91	41	23.84	3	1.74	0	0.00	172	100.00	3.94	0.72	Above Average
the ability to manage their time	34	19.77	75	43.60	56	32.56	7	4.07	0	0.00	172	100.00	3.79	0.80	Above Average
the ability to act as spokesperson	52	30.41	84	49.12	32	18.71	3	1.75	0	0.00	171	100.00	4.08	0.74	Above Average
the ability to live up to the expectations of others	29	16.96	95	55.56	45	26.32	2	1.17	0	0.00	171	100.00	3.88	0.68	Above Average

\*N varies as not all respondents chose to respond to all questions.

**TABLE X**

**RESPONDENTS PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN  
RELATIONS SKILLS DURING UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES  
IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION**

Human Relations Skills	Distribution of Extent of Development												Mean X	Standard Deviation SD	Interpretat
	Well above Average		Above Average		Average		Below Average		Well below Average		Total				
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	*N	%			
the ability to work with others	32	18.50	85	49.13	51	29.48	5	2.89	0	0.00	173	100.00	3.83	0.75	above average
patience	23	13.29	63	36.42	82	47.40	5	2.89	0	0.00	173	100.00	3.60	0.75	abpve average
good attendance practices	82	47.40	56	32.37	30	17.34	4	2.31	1	0.58	173	100.00	4.23	0.86	above average
the ability to delegate work responsibilities?	19	10.98	69	39.88	73	42.20	11	6.36	1	0.58	173	100.00	3.54	0.79	above average

\*N varies as not all respondents chose to respond to all questions.

Professional Etiquette and Conflict Resolution, as developed during undergraduate studies in agricultural education, are the areas of concern reflected in Table XI. When asked, "To what extent did you develop tactfulness?", respondents selected "above average" ( $x = 3.54$ ). In response to the question, "To what extent did you develop sportsmanship?", respondents indicated "above average" with a mean of 3.75. One hundred and seventy-three respondents indicated a choice on this question. Also in Table XI, 172 responses to the question, "To what extent did you develop self-discipline?", indicated "above average" ( $x = 3.88$ ). "Above average" was also indicated in response to the question, "To what extent did you develop a respect for the rights of others?", ( $x = 3.97$ ). One hundred seventy-three respondents answered this question. A sense of integrity was the next category shown in Table XI. Respondents rated development of a sense of integrity at "above average" ( $x = 4.01$ ), with only one of the total 174 not responding. When asked, "To what extent did you develop responsibility?", respondents' responses showed a rating of "above average" with a mean of 4.13. Again, 173 responses to the question were received. The development of dependability was the next category indicating that the response was "above average" ( $x = 4.20$ ) from the 173 responding respondents. Finally, Table XI reflects the findings of the question, "To what extent did you develop punctuality?". "Above average" was the reflection of the respondents' answers with a mean of 4.12 from 173 respondents.

**TABLE XI**

**RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE DURING  
UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES**

Professional Etiquette	Distribution by Response Category														
	Well above Average		Above Average		Average		Below Average		Well below Average		Total		Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretat
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	*N	%	X	SD	
tactfulness	15	8.67	69	39.88	85	49.13	4	2.31	0	0.00	173	100.00	3.54	0.68	Above Average
sportsmanship	27	15.61	80	46.24	63	36.42	3	1.73	0	0.00	173	100.00	3.75	0.73	Above Average
self-discipline	33	19.19	91	52.91	44	25.58	3	1.74	1	0.58	172	100.00	3.88	0.74	Above Average
a respect for the rights of others	41	23.70	88	50.87	42	24.28	2	1.16	0	0.00	173	100.00	3.97	0.72	Above Average
a sense of integrity	43	24.86	92	53.18	36	20.81	2	1.16	0	0.00	173	100.00	4.01	0.71	Above Average
responsibility	61	35.26	78	45.09	31	17.92	3	1.73	0	0.00	173	100.00	4.13	0.76	Above Average
dependability	69	39.88	72	41.34	30	17.34	2	1.16	0	0.00	173	100.00	4.20	0.76	Above Average
punctuality	64	36.99	70	40.46	36	20.81	3	1.73	0	0.00	173	100.00	4.12	0.79	Above Average

\*N varies as not all respondents chose to respond to all questions.

In the area regarding the ability of agricultural education teachers to utilize professional etiquette and conflict resolution skills, the respondents were asked to reply to six categories. Each category reflected the importance of specific abilities in relation to being an agricultural education teacher. Respondents rated the first category, the ability to accept constructive criticism, as "important" ( $x = 3.40$ ), with 173 responses (Table XII). The next category, the ability to objectively discuss differences of opinion, was responded to by 172 members of the responding population. It was perceived as "important" with a mean of 3.45. The ability to remain emotionally stable during a conflict was also answered by 172 members of the population. The response to this category indicated it was "very important" ( $x = 3.59$ ). The entire responding population answered the next category. The ability to defuse a potentially explosive conflict situation was rated "very important" with a mean of 3.60. Maintaining a non-combative attitude when faced with a conflict was a category that 173 members of the population responded to. It was rated "very important" ( $x = 3.55$ ). The last category, the ability to compromise in the face of conflict, was responded to by 172 teachers. The respondents indicated that the extent of importance was "important" with a mean of 3.30.

Table XIII indicates the perceptions of respondents regarding the location of development of human relations skills during undergraduate studies. When asked, "To what extent did you develop your human relations skills while still in college?", respondents replied, "above average" with a mean of 3.65. The entire responding population answered this category. The next category, "Do you believe the opportunities available for agricultural

**TABLE XII**

**RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE ABILITY OF  
AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION TEACHERS TO UTILIZE  
PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE AND CONFLICT  
RESOLUTION SKILLS**

Professional Etiquette and Conflict Resolution Skills	Distribution of Frequency of Importance Level												
	Very Important		Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important		Total		Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	*N	%	X	SD	
accept constructive criticism	75	43.35	93	53.76	5	2.89	0	0.00	173	100.00	3.40	0.54	Important
objectively discuss differences of opinion	83	48.26	85	49.42	4	2.33	0	0.00	172	100.00	3.45	0.54	Important
remain emotionally stable during a conflict	108	62.79	58	33.72	6	3.49	0	0.00	172	100.00	3.59	0.55	Very Important
defuse a potentially explosive conflict situation	109	62.64	62	35.63	3	1.72	0	0.00	174	100.00	3.60	0.52	Very Important
maintain a non-combative attitude when faced with a conflict	98	56.65	70	40.46	5	2.89	0	0.00	173	100.00	3.53	0.55	Very Important
to compromise in the face of conflict	66	38.37	94	54.65	11	6.40	1	0.58	172	100.00	3.30	0.61	Important

\*N varies as not all respondents chose to respond to all questions.

**TABLE XIII**

**RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE LOCATION OF  
DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS  
DURING UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES**

General Perceptions	Distribution Frequency by Response Category														
	Well above Average		Above Average		Average		Below Average		Well below Average		Total		Standard Mean Deviation		Interpretation
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	*N	%	X	SD	
To what extent did you develop your human relations skills while still in college?	18	10.34	83	47.70	68	39.08	5	2.87	0	0.00	174	100.00	3.65	0.70	Above Average
Do you believe the opportunities available for agricultural education students to develop their human relations skills are...	33	18.97	84	48.28	53	30.46	4	2.30	0	0.00	174	100.00	3.83	0.75	Above Average
To what extent did you as an agricultural education student develop your human relations skills through your involvement in other collegiate courses?	5	2.89	33	19.08	89	51.45	42	24.48	4	2.31	173	100.00	2.95	0.80	Average

\*N varies as not all respondents chose to respond to all questions.



education students to develop their human relations skills are...", was responded to by 174 members of the population. Responses indicated the opportunity to be "above average" ( $x = 3.83$ ). The final category reported in Table XIII indicated that respondents found the extent an agricultural education student developed human relations skills through involvement in other collegiate course to be "average" with a mean of 2.95. Only 173 members of the population responded to this question.

When asked, "How important is the development of human relations skills to agricultural education teachers?", 173 of the 174 responding teachers perceived the development of those skills to be "very important" ( $x = 3.72$ ) (Table XIV).

Table XV reported the perceptions of respondents regarding the incorporation of human relations skills into the agricultural education teaching methods course. One hundred seventy-three members of the total responding population responded to the question, "Do you favor incorporating the teaching of human relations skills into the agricultural education teaching methods course?". One hundred sixty four or 94.80 percent said "yes", while the remaining nine, or 5.20 percent, said "no".

The next four questions on the instrument were open-ended dealing with general perceptions of the reasoning and reactions related to human relations skills.

When asked, "What is the most important human relations skill developed by agricultural education teachers?" Only 162 of the respondents that answered the forced-choice questions responded to this question. Of these 162, 57 stated "the ability to work with and get along with others"; 20 said "communications skills"; 8 perceived it was "leadership"; 7 felt the most important skill was, "ability to motivate"; 7 more said, "patience"; and 5

**TABLE XIV**

**RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS TO AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION TEACHERS**

Question	Distribution Frequency by Response												
	Very Important		Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important		Total		Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N*	%	X	SD	
How important is the development of human relations skills to agricultural education teachers?	127	73.41	44	25.43	2	1.16	0	0.00	173	100.00	3.72	0.47	Very Important

\*N varies as not all respondents chose to respond to all questions.

TABLE XV

**RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE INCORPORATION  
OF HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS INTO THE AGRICULTURAL  
EDUCATION TEACHING METHODS COURSE**

Question	Distribution by Response					
	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	n	%	*N	%
Do you favor incorporating the teaching of human relations skills into the agricultural education teaching methods course?	164	94.80	9	5.20	173	100.00

\*N varies as not all respondents chose to respond to all questions.

perceived it to be the "ability to listen". The remaining responses were listed in Appendix D.

"What one reason do you believe the development of human relations skills to be important/unimportant?" was responded to by 153 members of the responding population. Responses of some of the teachers could be grouped as like answers. Fifty-four replied, "to get along and work with people"; 13 stated, "to be able to relate to students and their needs"; 8 said, "for effective communications"; 8 more said, "for stronger programs and increased community support"; 5 listed "necessary to success for individual or program"; 5 others perceived it to be "to gain personal respect or develop respect for others; while 3 stated simply, "for effectiveness". Additional unclassified responses were listed in Appendix E.

When asked, "How do your personal feelings toward social movements (i.e., animal rights, minority rights) affect your performance in the classroom?", eight members of the population chose not to answer. Of the remaining responding population, 65 said, "no effect; 20 stated, "very little effect"; 11 replied, "try not to let it affect"; and 7 perceived it would "affect somewhat". The remaining responses were listed in Appendix F.

The final open-ended question in the instrument, dealing with human relations skills, was "If you had a student whose parent(s) were active member(s) of an animal rights groups, how would it affect the way you treat the student in and out of class?". Only 8 respondents chose not to answer this question. One hundred and eight said it would have "no effect on treatment of student", and 10 reported it would have "very little effect". The remaining responses were listed in Appendix G.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

Agriculture in the 1990s has survived a century of unbelievable change. Mechanization and innovative technology has changed American agriculture from a simple, menial industry into a highly complex, superior product oriented competitive business. Along with the increased power of production came a decreased need for production agriculturalists.

Traditionally, agricultural education teachers have provided leadership and cooperation training for future agricultural leaders. As society has changed and the American home become restructured, the location of, sound, dependable training in human relations skills has moved from a home-centered base to a school-centered base. Agricultural education teachers responsibilities in these areas have increased to better serve all their students. Additionally, fundamental to sustaining American agriculture's competitive edge, the need for highly developed human relations skills has become imperative for the success of all agriculturalists..

Previous research reports that agricultural mechanization graduates felt human relations competencies were important to possess (Field 1986). Likewise in a later study, both vocational educators and superintendents found vocational agriculture students/FFA members to be above average in their social skills development (Peper 1989). Additional studies indirectly

linked to the attitudes and development of human relations competencies in relation to the effectiveness of the agricultural education program, substantiated the need for agricultural education teachers to be able to react positively in all areas of human relations.

The purpose of this chapter is to present concise summaries of the following topics: Rationale for the Study, Purpose of the Study, Objectives of the Study, Design of the Study, and the Major Findings of the Research. Through a detailed inspection of these topics, conclusions and recommendations are presented as based on the data analysis.

### Rationale for the Study

Considering time and money constraints, along with the nature of this research, the investigator determined it to be appropriate (under the circumstances) to be methodical and selective in the design and implementation of this research. The investigator purposefully selected a proportional random sample of certified agricultural education teachers from a five state region to cause this research effort to be more manageable. Even so, the investigator believes the findings of this research should prove to be beneficial in that additional evidence was obtained regarding the extent of human relations skills development achieved by agricultural education teachers.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess agricultural education teachers' perceptions of their personal development and understanding of

human relations skills in agricultural education. This study also attempted to discover if, in the five states identified, agricultural education teachers perceive they are equipped with enough human relations skills to function adequately in the communities they serve. In addition, the study also attempted to determine if continued or more in-depth educational opportunities should be provided for these teachers, to enhance their skills, on a regular basis.

### Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were presented as follows:

1. To determine the perceptions of a randomly selected, representative sample of agricultural education teachers, from a five state area (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas), regarding the importance of specific human relations skills.
2. To determine agricultural education teachers' perceptions of the opportunity for development of human relations skills during their collegiate undergraduate experiences.
3. To determine the perceptions of agricultural education teachers concerning...
  - a. the most valuable human relations skill for agricultural education teachers;
  - b. the level of importance of motivational and leadership skills needed by agricultural education teachers;
  - c. the level of development of cooperation and professional etiquette skills achieved during undergraduate work;

- d. the importance of conflict resolution skills needed by agricultural education teachers.
4. To determine if agricultural education teachers perceive they are equipped with sufficient human relations skills.
5. To determine perceptions as to whether continued or more in-depth educational opportunities should be provided for agricultural education teachers to enhance their existing skills.

### Design of the Study

The study surveyed, through mailed questionnaire, 331 selected agricultural education teachers concerning their perceptions of their personal development and understanding of human relations skills in agricultural education. The study also attempted to determine if agricultural teachers perceive they are equipped with enough human relations skills to function adequately in the communities they serve; and if continued or more in-depth educational opportunities should be provided for these teachers to enhance their skills. The 174 respondents of the survey represented agricultural education teachers in a five state area including: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

Following the selection of the mailed questionnaire as a data gathering mode, the instrument was developed to include questions pertaining to human relations skills development. Questions were designed to obtain the respondents' perceptions of specific areas of human relations development, including: (1) understanding self and others, (2) motivation, (3) leadership and cooperation, and (4) professional etiquette and conflict resolution.



The final draft of the questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of experts and revisions were made to clarify and strengthen the instrument. The initial and follow-up mailings (at a one month interval) were conducted in October and December, 1993.

Of the 331 selected agricultural education teachers included in the population, 174 (52.56 percent) returned the mailed questionnaire.

The information obtained from the instrument was analyzed based on a four point "Likert-type" scale assigned to questions rating the respondents' perceptions of human relations skills development. The response categories in this area were assigned the following numerical values: not important = 1; somewhat important = 2; important = 3; very important = 4. Real limits were set at 1.0 to 1.49 for not important; 1.50 to 2.49 for somewhat important; 2.50 to 3.49 for important; and, 3.50 to 4.0 for very important. A similar four point "Likert-type" scale was assigned to questions concerning social movements. The response categories in this area were assigned the following numerical values: disagree totally = 1; disagree somewhat = 2; agree somewhat = 3; agree totally = 4. Real limits for these categories were: 1 to 1.40 for disagree totally; 1.50 to 2.49 for disagree somewhat; 2.50 to 3.49 for agree somewhat; and, 3.50 to 4.0 for agree totally.

A five point "Likert-type" scale was used to rate perceptions of agricultural education teachers concerning leadership, cooperation and professional etiquette, as well as, general perceptions about human relations skills development in college. Numerical values for these categories were: well below average = 1; below average = 2; average = 3; above average = 4; well above average = 5. Real limits for this scale were: 1 to 1.49 for well below average; 1.50 to 2.49 for below average; 2.50 to 3.49 for average; 3.50 to 4.49 for above average; and 4.50 to 5.0 for well above average.

Descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions (numbers and percentages), means, and standard deviations, were used to analyze the data obtained from the returned questionnaires.

One yes or no question was included in the instrument concerning attitudes toward the incorporation of human relations skills into an agricultural education methods course. Responses to this question were analyzed by determining the frequency of each category.

Responses to the three demographic questions, concerning number of years taught, college of certification, and state currently teaching in, were analyzed by determining frequency and means.

### Major Findings of the Study

In reviewing the findings of this study, the average (mean) number of years of experience of the respondents was 15.15 with a standard deviation of 8.53. Of these respondents 58.05 percent (101) were teaching in Texas; 15.52 percent (27) were teaching in Oklahoma; 12.07 percent (21) were teaching in Louisiana; 9.77 percent (17) were teaching in Arkansas; and 4.60 percent (8) were teaching in New Mexico.

When reviewing responses to the question of college attended, 16.1 percent (28) of the respondents listed Oklahoma State University. Another 10.9 percent (19) attended East Texas State University. Seventeen (9.8 percent) of the respondents attended Texas Tech University, while 17 more (9.8 percent) attended Sam Houston State University. Fifteen of the respondents (8.6 percent) attended Texas A & M University. Fourteen of the respondents (8.0 percent) listed Tarleton State University as the college attended. The University of Southwestern Louisiana claimed 7.5 percent

(13) of the respondents. Another 10 respondents (5.7 percent) attended the University of Arkansas. The remaining 22 percent of the respondents attended schools listed in Table III.

When the mean responses of the 174 agricultural education teachers were combined, the mean of means revealed that the ability to utilize various human relations skills was perceived to be "very important" for all categories within the area of Human Relations and Personal Attributes (refer to Table XVI). Within that area the categories included: assume responsibility ( $x = 3.92$ ); display positive attitude ( $x = 3.82$ ); make decisions on the job ( $x = 3.86$ ); cope with stress ( $x = 3.78$ ); learn through mistakes ( $x = 3.67$ ); accept constructive criticism ( $x = 3.56$ ); establish effective relationship with fellow teachers and staff ( $x = 3.55$ ); and, establish effective relationship with supervisor ( $x = 3.64$ ). Within the area of Personal Feelings, Public Relations and Acceptance by Co-Workers the combined mean responses ( $x = 3.39$ ) revealed all categories to be "important" (Table XVI). The categories in the area of Personal Feelings, Public Relations and Acceptance by Co-Workers were: the stronger a person feels about an issue the more likely they will do something about it ( $x = 3.30$ ); the importance of good relations with the public ( $x = 3.73$ ); and, the need to be accepted by co-workers ( $x = 3.16$ ). Also seen in Table XVI, the area of agricultural education teachers extent of agreement with certain social movements, a variety of levels of agreement were seen, however, the mean of means ( $x = 2.13$ ) revealed an overall rating of "disagree somewhat" for categories in this area. Categories included: animal rights movement ( $x = 1.90$ ); vegetarianism ( $x = 1.73$ ); gay rights movement ( $x = 1.23$ ); women's rights movement ( $x = 2.61$ ); minority rights movement ( $x = 2.41$ ); and environmental movement ( $x = 2.92$ ).

TABLE XVI

**SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT OF  
HUMAN RELATION ABILITIES AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES,  
IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL FEELINGS, PUBLIC  
RELATIONS AND ACCEPTANCE BY  
CO-WORKERS, AND CERTAIN  
SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

Human Relations Skills Areas	(N = 174)		Denotes
	Mean Responses	Standard Deviation	
<b><u>Human Relations and Personal Attributes</u></b>			
<i>How important is it for you as an agricultural education teacher to be able to...</i>			
1. assume responsibility?	3.92	0.26	very important
2. display positive attitude?	3.82	0.38	very important
3. make decisions on the job?	3.86	0.34	very important
4. cope with stress?	3.78	0.44	very important
5. learn through mistakes?	3.67	0.51	very important
6. accept constructive criticism?	3.56	0.57	very important
7. establish effective relationship with fellow teachers and staff?	3.55	0.57	very important
8. establish effective relationship with supervisor?	3.64	0.51	very important
<b><u>Personal Feelings, Public Relations and Acceptance by Co-Workers</u></b>			
<i>How important is it for you as an agricultural education teacher to know...</i>			
9. that the stronger a person feels about an issue the more likely they will do something about it?	3.30	0.65	very important
10. the importance of good relations with the public?	3.73	0.45	very important
11. the need to be accepted by co-workers?	3.16	0.64	important

TABLE VXI (Continued)

Human Relations Skills Areas	(N = 174)		
	Mean Responses	Standard Deviation	Denotes
<b><u>Social Movements</u></b>			
<i>As an agricultural education teacher, to what extent do you agree with certain social movements?</i>			
12. animal rights movement	1.90	0.79	disagree somewhat
13. vegetarianism	1.73	0.71	disagree somewhat
14. gay rights movement	1.23	0.58	disagree somewhat
15. women's rights movement	2.61	0.80	agree somewhat
16. minority rights movement	2.41	0.79	disagree somewhat
17. environmental movement	2.92	0.65	agree somewhat

\*Not all respondents chose to respond to all questions.

The combined mean responses ( $x = 3.77$ ) of the 174 respondents suggest that their perception of the importance of categories in the area of Motivation to be "very important" (Table XVII). Categories within that area include: ability to motivate your self ( $x = 3.81$ ); ability to motivate students ( $x = 3.84$ ); ability to use motivational techniques ( $x = 3.66$ ); understanding the effect of a positive attitude on a person's motivation ( $x = 3.67$ ); understanding the effect of a negative attitude on a person's motivation ( $x = 3.58$ ); and understanding the influence of stress on motivation ( $x = 3.51$ ). Also revealed in Table XVII, under the area of Leadership and Cooperation, agricultural education teachers perceived their extent of development in all categories to be "above average" ( $x = 4.02$ ). Categories in this area reflected the extent of development of: their leadership skills ( $x = 4.26$ ); a sense of pride ( $x = 4.15$ ); self-initiative ( $x = 4.08$ ); the ability to set priorities ( $x = 3.94$ ); the ability to manage their time ( $x = 3.79$ ); the ability to act as spokesperson ( $x = 4.08$ ); and the ability to live up to the expectations of others ( $x = 3.88$ ).

TABLE XVII

SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE  
OF TEACHER ABILITIES REGARDING MOTIVATION,  
AND LEADERSHIP AND COOPERATION SKILLS

Human Relations Skills Areas	Mean Responses	(N = 174) Standard Deviation	Denotes
<b><u>Motivation</u></b>			
<i>How important is it for you as an agricultural education teacher to be able to...</i>			
1. motivate yourself?	3.81	0.39	very important
2. motivate students?	3.84	0.35	very important
3. use motivational techniques?	3.66	0.48	very important
 <i>How important is it for you as an agricultural education teacher to understand...</i>			
4. the effect of a positive attitude on a person's motivation?	3.67	0.48	very important
5. the effect of a negative attitude on a person's motivation?	3.58	0.54	very important
6. the influence of stress on motivation?	3.51	0.55	very important
 <b><u>Leadership and Cooperation</u></b>			
<i>To what extent do agricultural education graduates develop...</i>			
1. their leadership skills?	4.26	0.68	above average
2. a sense of pride?	4.15	0.65	above average
3. self-initiative?	4.08	0.73	above average
4. the ability to set priorities?	3.94	0.72	above average
5. the ability to manage their time?	3.79	0.80	above average
6. the ability to act as spokesperson?	4.08	0.74	above average
7. the ability to live up to the expectations of others?	3.88	0.68	above average

\*Not all respondents chose to respond to all questions.

As indicated by the mean of means ( $x = 3.80$ ), the extent of development of specific human relation skills was perceived to be "above average" for all categories within that area (Table XVIII). Categories included: the ability to work with others ( $x = 3.83$ ); patience ( $x = 3.60$ ); good attendance practices ( $x = 4.23$ ); and the ability to delegate work responsibilities ( $x = 3.54$ ). Also revealed in Table XVIII, perceptions regarding Professional Etiquette and Conflict Resolution showed teachers felt the extent they developed specific skills in these areas was "above average" ( $x = 3.95$ ). Categories in these areas included: tactfulness ( $x = 3.54$ ); sportsmanship ( $x = 3.75$ ); self-discipline ( $x = 3.88$ ); a respect for the rights of others ( $x = 3.97$ ); a sense of integrity ( $x = 4.01$ ); responsibility ( $x = 4.13$ ); dependability ( $x = 4.20$ ); punctuality ( $x = 4.12$ ). In the final area summarized in Table XVIII, a continuation of Professional Etiquette and Conflict Resolution, the mean of means ( $x = 3.47$ ) revealed the perception that it was "important" for agricultural education teachers to practice specific skills. Skills included in that category were: accept constructive criticism ( $x = 3.40$ ); objectively discuss differences of opinion ( $x = 3.45$ ); remain emotionally stable during a conflict ( $x = 3.59$ ); defuse a potentially explosive conflict situation ( $x = 3.60$ ); maintain a non-combative attitude when faced with conflict ( $x = 3.53$ ); and, to compromise in the face of conflict ( $x = 3.30$ ).

When the mean responses of the 174 respondents were combined, the mean of means revealed that the extent of development of human relations skills regarding location of that development was "average" ( $x = 3.47$ ). However, specific categories rated that extent higher. The categories included in that area are: extent of development of human relations skills while still in college ( $x = 3.65$ ); extent of opportunities available for



TABLE XVIII

SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS AND  
PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE AND CONFLICT  
RESOLUTION SKILLS DURING  
UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES  
IN AGRICULTURAL  
EDUCATION

Human Relations Skills Areas	(N = 174)		
	Mean Responses	Standard Deviation	Denotes
<u>Development of Human Relations Skills</u>			
<i>To what extent did you develop the following skills during your undergraduate studies in agricultural education...</i>			
8. the ability to work with others?	3.83	0.75	above average
9. patience?	3.60	0.75	above average
10. good attendance practices?	4.23	0.86	above average
11. the ability to delegate work responsibilities?	3.54	0.79	above average
<u>Professional Etiquette</u>			
<i>To what extent did you develop the following skills during your undergraduate studies in agricultural education...</i>			
1. tactfulness?	3.54	0.68	above average
2. sportsmanship?	3.75	0.73	above average
3. self-discipline?	3.88	0.74	above average
4. a respect for the rights of others?	3.97	0.72	above average
5. a sense of integrity?	4.01	0.71	above average
6. responsibility?	4.13	0.76	above average
7. dependability?	4.20	0.76	above average
8. punctuality?	4.12	0.79	above average

TABLE VXIII (Continued)

Human Relations Skills Areas	(N = 174)		
	Mean Responses	Standard Deviation	Denotes
<b><u>Conflict Resolution</u></b>			
<i>As an agricultural education teacher, how important is it for you to be able to...</i>			
9. accept constructive criticism?	3.40	0.54	important
10. objectively discuss differences of opinion?	3.45	0.54	important
11. remain emotionally stable during a conflict?	3.59	0.55	very important
12. defuse a potentially explosive conflict situation?	3.60	0.52	very important
13. maintain a non-combative attitude when faced with conflict?	3.53	0.55	very important
14. to compromise in the face of conflict?	3.30	0.61	important

\*Not all respondents chose to respond to all questions.

TABLE XIX

**SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING LOCATION  
AND DEVELOPMENT AND THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RELATIONS  
SKILLS BOTH DURING AND AFTER UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES**

Human Relations Skills Areas	(N = 174)		Denotes
	Mean Responses	Standard Deviation	
<b><u>Location of Development</u></b>			
1. To what extent did you develop your human relations skills while still in college?	3.65	0.70	above average
2. Do you believe the opportunities available for agricultural education students to develop their human relations skills are...	3.83	0.75	above average
3. To what extent did you as an agricultural education student develop your human relations skills through your involvement in other collegiate courses?	2.95	0.80	average
<b><u>Importance of Skills</u></b>			
1. How important is the development of human relations skills to agricultural education teachers?	3.72	0.47	very important

\*Not all respondents chose to respond to all questions.

agricultural education students to develop their human relations skills ( $x = 3.83$ ); and, extent of development of human relations skills through other collegiate courses ( $x = 2.95$ ). When asked how important is the development of human relations skills to agricultural education teachers, respondents rated that development as "very important" ( $x = 3.72$ ).

When asked whether or not they favored incorporating the teaching of human relations skills into the agricultural education teaching methods course, 94.80 percent (164) of the respondents replied "yes".

The remainder of the instrument contained open-ended questions. When asked, "What is the most important human relations skill developed by agricultural education teachers?", the most frequently listed response by the respondents was "the ability to work with and get along with others". The next most frequently listed response was "communications skills".

When asked, "What one reason do you believe the development of human relations skills to be important/unimportant?", the most frequently listed response by the respondents (who were agricultural education teachers) was "to get along with and work with people". The next most frequently listed response was "to be able to relate to students and their needs".

When asked, "How do your personal feelings toward social movements (i.e., animal rights, minority rights) affect your performance in the classroom?", the most frequently listed response was "no effect". The next most frequently listed response was "very little effect".

When asked, "If you had a student whose parent(s) were active member(s) of an animal rights group, how would it effect the way you treat the student in and out of class?", the most frequently listed response by the

respondents was "no effect on treatment of students". The next most frequently listed response was "very little effect".

### Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concluded the following:

1. Human relations skills were perceived to be very important to the success of agricultural education teachers in the five states studied.
2. The opportunity for development of human relations skills as an undergraduate in agricultural education was above average when compared to contemporary classes. Although it was undetermined whether or not human relations skills were developed adequately during the undergraduate studies, respondents overwhelmingly agreed that these skills should be incorporated into the teaching methods course.
3. A generalized concept of skills most needed by agricultural education teachers indicates the most valuable skill is the ability to get along with and work with others.
4. All phases of motivational skills are considered very important by agricultural education teachers and necessary for an effective program. Attitude toward motivation and motivational techniques determines the usefulness of these skills.
5. Respondents felt development of cooperation and etiquette skills during the undergraduate experience in agricultural education was above average when compared to outside classes. The need for teachers to project a dependable, cooperative image enhances their relationships with other professionals.

6. The ability to accept constructive criticism combined with a stable and calm attitude during conflict situations can lead to the diffusion of potentially explosive situations. Respondents felt the need for these skills was very important.
7. Teachers perceived themselves to be adequately prepared in human relations skills to serve their communities, however, continual need for improvement of these skills was recognized.
8. In acknowledging the need for human relations skills, teachers' responses also reflected that changing times and social movements require additional skill levels.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the researcher presents the following recommendations:

1. In order to adequately prepare beginning teacher to better serve their communities, human relations skills should be addressed in the areas of understanding others, cooperation, leadership, motivation, professional etiquette and conflict resolution during the teaching methods course work.
2. In an effort to prepare current teachers to deal with a changing society, continued human relations skills development courses should be offered regularly. In addition to traditional issues, current social movements should be included in these development sessions.
3. Agricultural education teachers should continue to develop their human relations skills by attending courses in development and by continued practice of existing skills.

### **Recommendations for Additional Research**

In regard to additional research the following recommendations have been made. The recommendations are judgments based on having conducted the study and on the review of the findings of the study.

1. More specific studies concerning the types of development courses needed for continued improvement of human relation skills should be conducted.
2. Similar research should be conducted concerning the perceptions of both students, school administrators and other teachers concerning the level of development and use of human relations skills by agricultural education teachers.

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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

*Human relations, like public relations, is the process of building understanding and support for a program of service and for those who are served by it. YOUR PERCEPTION of the extent of development of human relations skills you have achieved is important to this survey. Please check the ONE most appropriate response according to YOUR perception.*

---

**A. UNDERSTANDING SELF AND OTHERS  
HUMAN RELATIONS ABILITIES AND PERSONAL  
ATTRIBUTES**

How important is it for you as an agricultural education teacher to be able to:

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
	4	3	2	1
1.. assume responsibility?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. display a positive attitude toward people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. make decisions on the job?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. cope with stress?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. learn through mistakes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. accept constructive criticism?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. establish an effective relationship with fellow teachers and staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. establish an effective relationship with supervisors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

How important is it for you as an agricultural education teacher:

	Very Important 4	Important 3	Somewhat Important 2	Not Important 1
9. to know that the stronger a person feels about an issue the more likely they will do something about it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. to recognize the the value of good relations with the public?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. to recognize the need to be accepted by co-workers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

As an agricultural education teacher, to what extent do you agree with certain social movements? Beside each category rate your level of agreement.

	Agree Totally 4	Agree Somewhat 3	Disagree Somewhat 2	Disagree Totally 1
12. animal rights movement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. vegetarianism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. gay rights movement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. women's rights movemvent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. minority rights movements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. environmental movement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## B. MOTIVATION

How important is it for you as an agricultural education teacher to be able to:

- |                                 | Very<br>Important<br>4   | Important<br>3           | Somewhat<br>Important<br>2 | Not<br>Important<br>1    |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. motivate yourself?           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. motivate students?           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. use motivational techniques? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

How important is it for you as an agricultural education teacher to understand factors affecting motivation, such as:

- |  | Very<br>Important<br>4   | Important<br>3           | Somewhat<br>Important<br>2 | Not<br>Important<br>1    |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4. the effect of a positive attitude on a person's motivation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. the effect of a negative attitude on a person's motivation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. the influence of stress on motivation?                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## C. LEADERSHIP AND COOPERATION

To what extent do agricultural education graduates develop:

- |  | Well above<br>Average<br>5 | Above<br>Average<br>4    | Average<br>3             | Below<br>Average<br>2    | Well below<br>Average<br>1 |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. their leadership skills?                              | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| 2. a sense of pride?                                     | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| 3. self-initiative?                                      | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| 4. the ability to set priorities?                        | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| 5. the ability to manage their time?                     | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| 6. the ability to act as spokesperson?                   | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| 7. the ability to live up to the expectations of others? | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |

To what extent did you develop the following skills during your undergraduate studies in agricultural education:

	Well above Average 5	Above Average 4	Average 3	Below Average 2	Well below Average 1
8. the ability to work with others?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. patience?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. good attendance practices?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. the ability to delegate work responsibilities to others?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### D. PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

To what extent did you develop the following skills during your undergraduate studies in agricultural education:

	Well above Average 5	Above Average 4	Average 3	Below Average 2	Well below Average 1
1. tactfulness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. sportsmanship?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. self-discipline?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. a respect for the rights of others?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. a sense of integrity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. responsibility?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. dependability?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. punctuality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



As an agricultural education teacher, how important is it for you to be able to:

	Very Important 4	Important 3	Somewhat Important 2	Not Important 1
9. accept constructive criticism?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. objectively discuss differences of opinion?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. remain emotionally stable during a conflict?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. defuse a potentially explosive conflict situation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. maintain a non-combative attitude when faced with a conflict?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. to compromise in the face of conflict?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### E. GENERAL PERCEPTIONS

1. To what extent did you develop your human relations skills while still in college? The extent of your development as you perceive it was:
  - 5  well above average
  - 4  above average
  - 3  average
  - 2  below average
  - 1  well below average
  
2. Do you believe the opportunities available for agricultural education students to develop their human relations skills are:
  - 5  well above average
  - 4  above average
  - 3  average
  - 2  below average
  - 1  well below average

3. To what extent did you as an agricultural education student develop your human relations skills through your involvement in other collegiate courses (i.e., English, Math, History, Science, etc.)? The level of competency as you perceived it was:
- 5      well above average  
4      above average  
3      average  
2      below average  
1      well below average
4. How important is the development of human relations skills to agricultural education teachers?
- 4      very important  
3      important  
2      somewhat important  
1      not important
5. Do you favor incorporating the teaching of human relations skills into the agricultural education teaching methods course?
- yes  
       no
6. What is the most important human relations skill developed by agricultural education teachers?
- 
- 

7. What one reason do you believe the development of human relations skills to be important/unimportant?
- 
-

8. How do your personal feelings towards social movements affect your performance in the classroom?
- 
- 
9. If you had a student whose parent(s) were active member(s) of an animal rights group, how would it effect the way you treat the student in and out of class?
- 
- 
10. How many years have you taught high school agricultural education?
- 
11. From what college or university did you receive your teaching certification?
- 
12. In what state do you now teach? **Circle one.**  
(Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas)
- 

*Thank you for your cooperation with this project. We hope that as a result of your input, the field of agricultural education will be better prepared to successfully meet the changing attitudes of our time!*

**APPENDIX B**  
**COVER LETTER**

# Oklahoma State University

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Department of Agricultural Education  
448 Agricultural Hall  
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078-0484  
405-744-5129, FAX 405-744-5176

*October 28, 1993*

*Dan Foster  
Chase High School  
Agriculture Department  
Danlee, Texas 00000*

*Dear Dan:*

*We are conducting research designed to determine the extent of selected skills in human relations developed by graduates of agricultural education programs in a five state area. States included in this research endeavor are: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. We value your opinion, therefore, you have been specially selected to be included in this research effort.*

*Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the postage-paid envelope within the week. It will take approximately ten minutes of your time. Please be assured that your responses will remain confidential and will be included as a part of the total findings of this research. Thanking you in advance for your cooperation in this important research project, we remain,*

*Sincerely,*

*Billye Foster  
Graduate teaching assistant*

*Eddy Finley  
Professor*

*Enclosure: Questionnaire  
Return envelope*



**APPENDIX C**  
**FOLLOW-UP LETTER**

# Oklahoma State University

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Department of Agricultural Education  
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*December 1, 1993*

*Dan Foster  
Chase High School  
Agriculture Department  
Danlee, Texas 0000*

*Dear Dan:*

*Realizing the **Holiday Season** is upon us, we know your schedule is quite full. We are attempting to conclude our research concerning agricultural education teachers' perspectives on their human relations skills development, and we need your input to increase the validity of our study. Further, please know you were specially selected to be included in this study.*

*You should have received a questionnaire packet approximately three weeks ago. If it has not been misplaced, please take a few minutes to complete it and return it as soon as possible. If you did not receive your packet, please return the postcard enclosed for a replacement.*

*Thank you in advance for helping to complete our research. May you have a happy **Holiday Season** and enjoy a prosperous **New Year!***

*Sincerely,*

*Billye Foster  
Graduate teaching assistant*

*Dr. Eddy Finley  
Professor*

**APPENDIX D**  
**RESPONSES TO QUESTION E-6.**



**6. What is the most important human relations skill developed by agricultural education teachers?**

**RESPONDENTS' REPLIES:**

Reply	Number of Respondents
No response	12
Leadership	8
Ability to motivate	7
Communications skills	20
Ability to listen	5
Patience	7
Ability to work with and get along with others	57

**Other Non-categorized Responses**

Ability to be responsible and trustworthy.

Responsibility

Understanding

Reasoning other thoughts

To see both sides, give Pro's-Con's without giving your personal ideals.

Self-discipline

Self-motivation

Tact

Learning to be tactful

Self-discipline

Promotion of your FFA program to administrators

## Cooperation

Developing positive attitudes in students

Gaining community support

The ability to balance the needs of students/parents within school guidelines.

How to get along, to accept positive criticism

Compromise--because not everything will always be perfect.

Respect and cooperation

Recognize student with problems

People skills

Handling stress

Adaptability to given situations

How to deal with so many different kinds of kids

Respecting the rights of others

Understanding other people--respect their opinions & feelings

Make others feel good about themselves

Able to put your point across without conflict

The ability to cross the generation gap and relate to young and old alike.

Tactfulness

Discussing social values

Building self esteem in students--teaching manners

Be honest & fair to everyone

Working with students

Learn how to accept the responsibility of being a good role model

Thinking positively and developing the ability to work & communicate with others.

Compromise during conflict--anyone in education now must "cut the best deal they can"

The ability to gain respect by students.

Learning to deal with all persons equally.

Accept constructive criticism and maintaining a positive attitude.

Dealing with others on a daily basis.

Manners.

The ability to compensate for others lack of knowledge in a given area.

Self-worth

Flexibility and tolerance with different personalities & maintaining a positive attitude.

Being able to accept other teachers as equal partners in the process.

Remaining calm during a crisis.

Accepting the general public

Understanding of students needs

Giving a sense of pride & honor to students

The ability to adapt to any given situation.

To be able to treat every student fairly and impartially regardless of their beliefs.

To be able to relate to so many different people from so many different backgrounds.

Getting along with parents

Being open-minded to others

**The ability to interact in a positive manner w/peers, parents, supervisors, & community & to handle the stress that working at a school normally can cause, & the stress that can come from professional jealousies (recognized program, getting xtra professional leave, etc.).**

### **Teamwork**

**To build confidence in young men & women to state their case.**

**APPENDIX E**  
**RESPONSES TO QUESTION E-7**

**7. What one reason do you believe the development of human relations skills to be important/unimportant?**

**RESPONDENTS' REPLIES:**

Reply	Number of Respondents
no answer to question	21
to get along and work with people	54
to be able to relate to students and their needs	13
for effective communications	8
for stronger programs and increased community support	8
necessary to success for individual or program	5
to gain personal respect or develop respect for others	5
for effectiveness	3

**Additional Non-Categorized Replies**

survival

self-worth and integrity important

To maintain our morals & ethics.

We use them every day.

everyone must answer to someone else

I feel it effects the people's lives, some to a lesser degree, but some significantly.

So that peace and harmony can prevail. I read a quote that sums up my belief and it follows: "The aim of argument, or of discussion should not be victory, but progress." Joseph Joubert

Important to understand our changing world.

professional etiquette

PR must do it

so one can interact socially with students, public, co-workers, etc.

stress

To provide better teacher-parent involvement.

To better our nation academically as a whole.

To be able to see both sides of the problem.

understanding different kinds of people

It will affect the overall population someday.

To help other help themselves as well as yourself.

We have to learn to live as a community with different opinions and ideas.

We live in world with other human beings.

Personal development can help you up the career ladder quickly.

My job demands that I work with other people.

To avoid misconceptions about Ag Education.

To learn to tolerate others.

Skills are important just to get along in life.

Makes it easier to set common goals and get them achieved easier.

Public relations--I feel the Ag Ed instructor is a community servant.

The ability to know the emotional status of the classroom/individual.

Survival as a teacher.

When dealing with a community of different tastes and educational levels, one must be able to deal with all levels at any given time.

To be able to understand how others feel and think.

Because teaching deals with all people.

You need human relation skills in everyday life no matter what you do for a living.

Provides the ability to cooperate.

"People skills" are what sets ag science teachers apart from other teachers and from other ag professionals.

Citizenship

Without human relation skills you won't be able to keep your job.

Teaches you to cope with society.

it will make you a better teacher

If people think badly of you they will always be looking for things you are doing wrong.

Important--you are dealing with future parents everyday.

Human relations is very important in the job we are in and do. Without human relations skills you can't survive in this business.

Important so a person can keep a job at one school for a life time.

happier in life, less stress

I believe that a large portion of human relations is developed outside of class, rather than being taught in college.

The best way to accomplish goals.

cannot teach w/o those skills

If unimportant then you must be selfish.

develop personality

It is not being developed at college.



Human relation skills are important because they enhance all areas of instruction and activities outside of the classroom.

Today's classroom is full of undisciplined students that need to be taught an appreciation for rules and respect of society.

It is the base from which everything springs.

Important

Job security

Peace & Harmony through out the world

**APPENDIX F**  
**RESPONSES TO QUESTION E-8**

8. **How do your personal feelings toward social movements (i.e., animal rights, minority rights) affect your performance in the classroom?**

**RESPONDENTS' REPLIES:**

Reply	Number of Respondents
question not answered	8
no effect	65
very little effect	20
try not to let it affect	11
affects somewhat	7

**Other Non-categorized Responses**

I try to be open minded & consider things of this nature when teaching. It doesn't necessarily affect my performance as much as it does content & content presentation.

I have not had to deal with this issue yet.

To each it's own.

I try to teach my students the reasons why these groups exist and their philosophy.

I suppose we are all affected somewhat by our beliefs on different subjects. (minority rights are important to observe--animal rights need to be considered but not feared.

I view my opinions and hopefully I can support that opinion.

tend to be one sided

I try to give all sides of an issue & not let my opinion get involved.

units on subject

As a leader we need to remain neutral on most issues--but the kids decide what is the "right" thing to do.

Honesty in opinion but tolerant of others.

Strongly, I'm against the animal rightists & environmentalists.

Attempt to remain neutral and provide facts.

I tend to lean to one side. It is hard to be impartial.

Motivation for discussion.

I state my feeling but I respect the feeling of others.

I try to put personal feelings aside & look at the facts, but still they will weigh on the outcome of the situation.

I am ready to effectively defend ag's position on these matters.

I believe each and every person has a right to their own beliefs but what is done is for the good of people first and animals second.

environmental

I let my feelings be known, but give others the right to voice their opinion.

I try to be objective and look at both sides.

It just helps me enlighten & show both sides.

It gives us a different avenue for discussing this with the SOEP programs we have.

A great deal. I express my views regularly.

I talk to students about it but try to not let it upset me.

I try to practice open-mindedness.

I try not to allow my feeling show, but if I take sides, I try to demonstrate reasonable objective for the other side also.

positively influences

affect your point of view of material presented

I get sick of minority rights--we have bent over backwards to get along with these people & they have taken advantage of it.

I give the facts on issues and let students make up their mind.

I have to watch things that I say.

I believe that most of the social movements are blown way out of context.

Springboard for discussion.

They have gone too far.

I try to keep my personal views to myself. We do address current affairs with open minds.

I must be open minded and accept others opinion.

abusive behavior by any special interest group upsets

not to impressed

I probably address those topics with more sincerity and time, however, I try to be objectionable.

The Government has let social movements get out of control. News media is also an important culprit.

I try to give both views of the issues.

I feel that animal rights affects our program as a whole.

These things must not affect my performance. My opinion is told & others are asked for openly & honestly.

I try to foster open-mindedness and critical thinking in all courses.

All classroom information must be facts--if you give your opinion--state that it is an opinion.

Animal rights I spend some time on--I am a strong believer on proper treatment of animals.

Make me careful in how I state ideas about these.

depends on the movement--I try to keep my personal thought out of the CR

Should not have to affect much if objective style is used.

I attempt to teach the facts concerning the issues and not my personal feelings.

They have a right to their opinion as long as it does not interfere with other people

must be careful not to influence others with your opinions

important

They have some valid points and should be looked at but not run down our throat.

open minded--listen

very much because you have to consider the opinions of all people

makes you more careful of the way others think of your program

you must cover all sides

To me these organizations are uniformed, out-of-touch, and self-centered

I will modify my instruction to express my beliefs on certain subjects, but will leave opportunities for others to express their beliefs.

I hope they affect my performance in a positive manner.

**APPENDIX G**  
**RESPONSES TO QUESTION E-9**

**9. If you had a student whose parent(s) were active member(s) of an animal rights group, how would it effect the way you treat the student in and out of class?**

**RESPONDENTS' REPLIES:**

Reply	Number of Respondents
question not answered	8
very little effect	10
no effect on treatment of student	108

Other Non-categorized Responses

I don't know. But, there would be some changes.

Greatly

different

Not any different than if they were gay.

I would try hard to let it have no effect but it would be hard.

Be very cautious of what is said & done around them because they usually don't tell the whole story.

They probably do not understand where I come from--a livestock production field. I never will understand their view.

It would provide a means of information, if it was properly counter balanced.

My students are people outside of who their parents are. They are all created equal in the eyes of God and our Constitution.

Have not been faced with this situation. Could probably handle it as a traditional thing.

I'm faced with that situation. I try to treat every student equal, but I will not compromise to their way of thinking.



I would give the student an opportunity to express their view.

Give him a chance to voice his opinion if he wanted to, the, teach on!

I would inform the student that animal protein is necessary to a human diet, vitamin B12 and other essential amino acids are from animal protein.

I would try to be impartial, but would probably try to show the student both sides of the issue.

Depends on the parents involvement in my personal affairs.

Cover more on why we do things the way we do.

Stay in line with teaching material for course.

I would try to be as fair & honest to them as I could.

Treatment would depend entirely on that student's activities. Unruly behavior on their part would be dealt with.

Depends on the student--with this type of parents he is probably a little different himself.

it depend on if he or she is willing to listen to the facts

I would not expose the student to situations that would provoke the parents.

I would respect the opinion of the parents and student but I would teach the issue the way I feel it should be taught.

I would teach them the benefits of present ways & methods.

I would try to treat them equal if they would not confront me personally.

I would express my view as one possibility. I would respect their opinion.

I would still express my views but I wouldn't impose them on anyone.

I wouldn't say anything to offend.

I would try to explain to them the purpose of animals.

I would probably THINK a bit more before I did something involving that student.

try to educate him about the movement

class would be taught the same as before/with opportunities for students to voice their views & why

I would try to accept their view as a personal choice and not disapprove of it in front of the student. I would show both sides of the issue.

with caution

more careful about statements regarding that groups' beliefs

students are not responsible for the ignorance of their parents

explain facts--but don't put down personal beliefs

you cannot afford to destroy a student char. for the actions of his/her parents.

I hope I could be reasonable & fair in and out of class.

Other than watching what I say, it wouldn't.

Everyone has a right to free speech so as long as they didn't interfere with my program. I have no problems.

Not a great deal different than others, except to explain the other side of the story to him.

Take care not to offend but at the same time get my message across.

I'd try to present the big picture with facts.

I would treat he/she with respect if they were good citizens of the class. I would not let parents' problem interfere. I have had parents such as this question described.

I would try to reach that student with more factual info.

I would probably take a more active interest in his education.

VITA 2

Billye Beth Foster

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

**Thesis:** PERCEPTIONS OF SELECTED AGRICULTURAL  
EDUCATION TEACHERS REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE,  
DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF HUMAN  
RELATIONS SKILLS

**Major Field:** Agricultural Education

**Area of Specialization:** Animal Science

**Biographical:**

**Personal Data:** Born in Fort Worth, Texas, July 26, 1953, the daughter of W. D., Jr. and Birdie Lou Berry. Married Billy Dan Foster, January 5, 1974. Three children: Daniel, Chase and Lee.

**Education:** Graduated from Sulphur Springs High School, Sulphur Springs, Texas, May, 1971; received Bachelor of Science from Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, December, 1974, with a major in Animal Production; received Master of Science from East Texas State University, Commerce, Texas, December, 1987, with a major in Agriculture; completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in May, 1994.

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH

Date: 09-22-93

IRB#: AG-94-008

Proposal Title: PERCEPTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT AND UNDERSTANDING OF  
HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Principal Investigator(s): Eddy Finley, Billye Foster

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

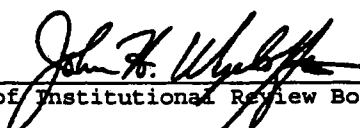
Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

APPROVAL STATUS SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW  
BOARD AT NEXT MEETING.  
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A  
CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR  
BOARD APPROVAL. ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO  
BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

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Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for  
Deferral or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature:

  
Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: September 24, 1993