

**National Council for Agricultural Education
End of Year Progress Report-December 2008
Submitted by Isaac Kershaw, 2008 NCAE President**

10x15: The Long-Range Goal for Agricultural Education

By 2015 there will be in operation 10,000 quality agricultural education programs serving students through an integrated model of classroom/laboratory instruction, experiential learning, and leadership and personal skill development. Further, all students will be members of the FFA and have a supervised agricultural experience that supports classroom and laboratory instruction.

Quality Program Standards for Agricultural Education

The priority goal for the Task Force in 2008 was to test a national dissemination and implementation strategy to assist all secondary school in program improvement. A Dissemination Conference for National Quality Program Standards, planned and conducted by the LPS staff and Taskforce members, was a great success. The event was held July 14 - 17, 2008 at the Longview Conference Center on the Land O Lakes Purina Mills complex at Gray Summit, Missouri. Conference attendees included secondary agricultural education teachers, state staff and teacher educators from the ten volunteer pilot states. The purposes of the conference were to:

- Prepare teachers to manage local program improvement efforts based on their on-line program improvement tool data while emphasizing a balanced program and a balanced personal life.
- Initiate planning efforts and action plans to implement a similar conference in their home state the following year for all secondary teachers in Agricultural Education.

Post NQPS Dissemination Conference activities now being completed are:

- Teachers working with administrators and advisory council members to implement the action plans devised at the conference.
- State staff, teacher leaders and teacher educators are implementing action plans for a 2009 summer teachers conference on NQPS.
- In the spring of 2009 the LPS staff will identify 10 new pilot states and the process will begin again for the second and final pilot Dissemination Conference for the National Quality Program Standards.

During the 2008-09 school year LPS and State Staff are conducting on-site visits with pilot schools. In May of 2009, pilot schools will re-administer the 'on-line tool' (completed by the local instructor in cooperation with the administrator and advisory council member) to gather program improvement data and measure program improvement. In the summer, pilot states will conduct a statewide NQPS conference lead by pilot teachers, teacher leaders, teacher educators, and LPS.

Curriculum for Agricultural Sciences Education

All lessons in the two foundation courses have been completed. In the Principles of Plant Science Curriculum 26 lessons have been completed and in the Principles of Animal Science 29 lessons are finished. All lessons are posted for pilot testing on an online server and are accessible by Lead Teachers who attended a Leadership Training session in July 2008. Pilot testing will be followed by a field test involving teachers from each of the initial contributing states.

An important feature of the CASE model is the training and professional development provided with the curriculum. The first CASE Summer Training Institute will be held in Nicholasville, Kentucky at the Jessamine Career and Technical Center in July. The training will consist of ten days of lesson exploration, pedagogical instruction and demonstration of laboratories and equipment.

Team Ag Ed Learning Center

The Team Ag Ed Learning Center (TAEELC) is dedicated to exploring unique and useful electronic instructional resources for Agricultural Education Teachers and their students. The TAEELC was officially launched in September 2007. Since then, the user base has grown from 0 to over 30,000 accounts. The TAEELC offers e-learning courses, teaching resources, online student assessments and lesson plans, most of which are available without charge. TAEELC lesson plans have many unique features- there is a PDF version for offline printing, the online version features section categorization, search capabilities and note taking on individual pages that will stay with each lesson. In addition to the lesson plan features, LifeKnowledge Online (hosted on the TAEELC) gives teachers the ability to assign assessments to their students and report on the results. Additionally, students can be imported from the FFA Membership Database or inserted based on a list submitted by the teacher. Selected products being offered on TAEELC include:

- Questionmark, system for serving online surveys and assessments.
- Exotic Newcastle Disease and Avian Influenza online courseware. Sponsored by United States Department of Agriculture.
- Focusing on Agricultural Issues Courseware.
- Seven online Swine Management courses. Sponsored by The National Pork Board.
- The Welding Connects Your World course, funded by Lincoln Electric.
- LifeKnowledge developed by the LifeKnowledge Center for Agricultural Education, a division of the National FFA Organization
- Agricultural Risk Management instructional materials.
- National Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (AFNR) Career Cluster Content Standards.
- The Living to Serve (LTS) instructional materials.
- The National Animal Identification System (NAIS) instructional materials.

The TAEELC staff is constantly reviewing materials and meeting with instructional material owners for new catalog offerings. Many offerings are currently in development or are coming soon such as Ethanol Instructional Materials and Source Water Instructional Materials. Additionally, the TAEELC has provided development, hosting and delivery for multiple special projects including FFA State Officer Leadership Assessments, The National Quality Program Standards (NQPS) electronic pilot and LifeKnowledge Commercialization. TAEELC is available for free use at www.taelc.org or www.agedlearning.org.

Food, Agriculture and National Resources Content Standards

This initiative is focused on transitioning the original AFNR Career Cluster Knowledge and Skill Statements to an improved product that has (1) totally revised Cluster Skills that cross all pathways, (2) levels of performance for each element, (3) an alignment with academic content standards and (4) been expanded to include Biotechnology as a pathway.

New content standards are now available, on the Ag Ed Learning Center, for the original seven AFNR Pathways: Agribusiness Systems; Animal Systems; Environmental Service Systems; Food Products and Processing Systems; Natural Resource Systems; Plant Systems; and Power, Structural and Technical Systems. The AFNR content standards have been cross-walked with national Math, Science, Language Arts and Social Studies Content Standards. Development of AFNR Cluster Skills that cross all pathways and the Biotechnology Systems pathway content standards are following the same high standards for development as the original pathway content standards and should be ready for release in early 2009.

Develop Multiple Agricultural Education Designs

This initiative is focused on building a framework that enables development of programs based on the needs of customers, the society in which they live and the culture of their communities. The steering committee met in January to propose and prioritize five potential new models. They are:

- Home School/On-line – Reaches home school students and rural high schools without agricultural education programs
- Pre-professional Sciences – High-level, heavily science-based agricultural education
- Issue-based Agriculture – Focuses on issues affecting food, natural resources, environmental sciences and the consumer
- Specialized Programs – Concentration on a single career pathway, focused programming
- Urban Programming – Multi-subject areas that reach the under-served urban audience

The Council has approved \$15,000 for a study to identify successful innovative models around the U.S. The taskforce will then determine if anything currently in use may be applicable to this initiative.

National Agricultural Education Inservice (2008) and Leaders Summit (2009)

National Agricultural Education In-service for 2008 was held January 31- February 3 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The key message was all about “Recruitment, Development, and Retention. This in-service provided an excellent opportunity to exchange promising practice ideas and gain insight on educational leadership and management strategies. Three hundred and eight agricultural educators attended with 21 vendors participating.

The 2009 National Agricultural Education Leaders Summit, also to be held in Indianapolis, Indiana will focus on what action we as a profession want to consider in order to secure the future of Agricultural Education. The 2009 Summit will focus on:

- Legislation: Review legislative action taken in a number of states to strengthen agricultural education.
- Leadership: Structure and challenges of providing state level leadership for agricultural education.
- Models for Delivering Agricultural Education: Middle school Programming, Virtual on-line agricultural education classes, Televised agricultural education classes in the rural areas, Postsecondary agricultural education opportunities, Urban agricultural education needs.
- NCAE 10 x 15 Initiatives. Progress and current status of the 10 x 15 initiatives.

Agricultural Education White Papers

In 2005-06 the Council commissioned the creation of three white papers. One will focus on middle school education, one on standards and accountability and one on teacher

education/recruitment. Proposals were submitted and evaluated with contracts then extended to accomplish the work.

It has taken a considerable amount of time and effort but the papers have been developed, reviewed by content experts and are in the final stages of editing. The white paper on middle schools should be released by the end of February 2009. The other two should be released by May 2009. The white papers will be published on the Council Web site.

Program Data Reporting

The focus of this initiative is to develop a single, easy to use data collection process driven by the National Council for Agricultural Education. A plan of action is underway that included administering a detailed survey to determine what data is being valued and collected by states, how states are collecting data, when states are collecting data, roadblocks to collecting data and best management practices for data collection.

The initial survey has been completed with 40 states responding. It is hoped that the information will help guide the taskforce in identifying an IT solution that is functional, integrated and tested for usability. Further efforts will include training materials, pilot implementation (including local integration and feedback), revisions and enhancements and state-by-state implementations.

Agricultural Educator Recruitment

The focus of this initiative is to secure an abundant supply of well-trained, highly qualified agricultural educators for all roles (teacher, teacher educator, association leader, state and national staff) within the growing profession. There are five major phases of the recruitment effort: 1) Marketing and communications; 2) Identifying target audience; 3) Assembling a recruitment work committee; 4) Developing products and strategies; and 5) Implementing a total recruitment plan.

The committee leadership met this fall with Land O'Lakes Purina marketing experts to discuss taking a strategic marketing approach to teacher recruitment. A need was surfaced for market research with teacher and student audiences. Through conference calls, the taskforce leadership identified priority audiences. Three focus group sessions were conducted at the 2008 National FFA Convention with students preparing to be teachers to identify factors that contributed to their decisions to pursue teaching agriculture. Emphasis was placed on including non-traditional audiences with a focus on ethnic diversity. Additional focus groups are planned for the national MANNRS conference in March 2009.

The committee will seek funding for a study to estimate a five-year projected demand for agriculture teachers. It will be used to reinforce awareness of the agriculture teacher shortage and guide perspective students in their choice of "teaching as a career." Other efforts will focus on developing tools, materials and strategies to aid teachers and the various Team Ag Ed organizations in recruiting teachers.

Agricultural Education Advocacy Strategy

The focus of this initiative is to develop local, state and national strategies that advocate effectively on behalf of agricultural education. Plans include creating materials, tools and education that implement the advocacy strategies. Paul Larson, Wisconsin, assumed chairmanship of the taskforce last August. Paul has held a number of planning meetings with key committee members to plan implementation of the following projects:

- Advocacy Engagement Strategies – This project will focus on strategies to engage all agricultural educators and supporters of agricultural education as advocates for the profession at all levels – local, state, and national. Making advocacy a part of the daily life of educators is a key objective. Surveys of states are planned to collect advocacy activities and best practices.
- National Advocacy Agenda Development – This project will design a grassroots system for identifying the initiatives for which the profession should advocate, prioritizing those initiatives and establishing a national advocacy agenda for the profession.
- Communication Strategies – This project will develop strategies needed to effectively communicate key messages to agricultural educators and supporters of agricultural education. This will ensure all parties have adequate information to conduct advocacy efforts with consistent messages. The project will review and update advocacy materials currently available.

Agricultural Education Branding Strategy

The focus of this initiative is to position agricultural education as a leading force in delivering needs-based education and to enhance problem solving and decision-making through applied learning while building student self worth. The initiative seeks to help the agricultural education profession speak with one voice supported by communications to segmented audiences through appropriate media channels.

A “request for proposal” has been developed to address all aspects of the brand strategy initiative, including the first phase of brand assessment research and a brand management evaluation. The RFP is ready for distribution to vendors pending available funding. Estimated cost of the initial phase of the branding initiative is \$400,000.