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NEW/BEGINNING TEACHER COLUMN

by: Zach Uphold, Williamsburg HS

“Overwhelming” is a word that may come to mind for many new and beginning teachers. Finding useful information about unfamiliar subject matter, turning that information into lesson plans, and then developing a few lessons into a unit or even a course is one of the more daunting tasks that make a first year so “overwhelming.”



However, through the New and Beginning Teacher program I have received great support in accomplishing these tasks. I have fully enjoyed the opportunity to attend numerous workshops offered through the program. The programs included subject matter ranging from forestry to horticulture and from biotechnology to agriculture mechanics. Though the programs varied in content, they shared some commonalities including experienced, well-versed presenters and plenty of classroom-ready materials.

New and beginning teachers, take advantage of these occasions to draw from the experience of those around you. And experienced teachers, please continue to offer your services in order to help those of us that are willing to learn. Thanks to the faculty who have helped me during my first two years as an agriculture educator!

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Creating Enthusiasm

Halifax Area HS - Halifax, PA

Francine Ferster has spent the last four and half years transforming the Halifax Area HS Agricultural Education program into a program, which reflects the diversity of the agricultural industry. On any given day, Francine will instruct students in the areas of plant science, animal science, food science, vocational projects in woodworking, wildlife/forestry, agricultural mechanics, and supervised agricultural experience programs (SAE's). Her overall goal for the program is to have “all students feel comfortable in agriculture.”



Francine Ferster, AG Educator

The “Freshman Seminar” cluster course is just one way Francine accomplishes this goal. Every nine weeks she receives a new group of students who are enrolled in the cluster course. For each of the nine weeks, the students are treated as consumers who are being made aware of agriculture and its many facets. As in most agriculture programs, Francine tries to make the course as much hands-on learning as possible. This cluster has had a positive impact on her program. “It (the course) helped to enroll an additional 20 new students for this school year.”

Another attraction to the Halifax program is the “Chapter Pig” project. In 1999 Hoss's donated the grand-champion

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sow from the Gratz Fair to the FFA chapter. The students learned about artificial insemination and then had the opportunity to see the actual results of such a technique. The sow farrowed six pigs. Through an application and lottery system, five students were granted weaned pigs to raise for the 2000 Gratz Fair. The sixth pig was given to Francine to raise for a breeding animal for future years.

Before receiving the pigs, the animal science class discussed potential impacts of environmental differences would have on growth rate. Genetics also played a roll in the discussion. To the amazement of the students, environmental conditions played a vital role in the size of the pigs. At the show, the smallest of the five pigs weighed in at 190 lbs. while the largest was weighed in at 250 lbs.

Because of the success and community support of the "Chapter Pig" project, Valley Ag & Turf Co. donated the grand-champion sow from the 2000 fair to the chapter. This year Francine has also made plans to breed two sows so more students will be able to have hands-on learning through the project. Each student who raises the pigs keep records for use in his/her SAE program.

Francine also devised a way to energize the first year students. In the course, the "Introduction to Agriculture," students host an FFA Week Buffet for the school's faculty and staff. All the buffet items were Pennsylvania crops or products in which the students researched prior to the event. The students discovered the origin of the crop and if it was a byproduct. Not only do the students conduct the research, but they also prepared the items for the event.

Francine and her students have made a point of keeping their community and administrators aware of the progress of the program. Because of this awareness, Jim Dull, Halifax Area HS Superintendent and Galen Motter, School Board Member spearheaded the kettle-cooking project when students are butchering hogs. Francine commented, "With their suits on, they were teaching the students how to get the kettles ready and then actually worked with them to make scrapple. It really made an impact on my students." Other community members also assisted on a variety of projects and events.

But what has really amazed Francine is the enthusiasm of the students. "Due to curriculum changes, I am unable to teach landscape drawing and instillation. I have approximately 15 students who formed a committee to landscape the school's courtyard. On their own time and with my guidance, they have broken the committee into subgroups. From the subgroups they have designed a landscape plan and have begun to construct elements for the project. This spring the committee will install the design."

It is very evident that Francine Ferster has made great strides in the last four and half years. However she has plans for more improvements. For instance, she is currently working on partitioning off the shop into specific curriculum areas for hands-on learning. Francine would also like to have more students involved at the State and National FFA levels. In addition, she had one student, Todd Shertver, selected to be a percussionist at the 2000 National FFA Convention.

Through creative ideas and community awareness, Francine Ferster continues to transform the Halifax Area HS agricultural education program into an ideal learning institution.

GARDENING WEBSITES

Websites were contributed by Paul Heasley of State College H.S.

www.gardenfrog.com There are 56 links to gardening, as well as other topics.

www.suite101.com/welcome.cfm/kids A site with information and activities for teaching kids about gardening and plant life, theme gardens, and has lots of articles.



Introducing... Thaddeus White

Thaddeus White began his agricultural education career at Bellwood-Antis HS as an active member of the FFA chapter.

James Mackereth provided him the learning experiences needed to understand the diversity of agriculture. Upon graduating high school, Thad choose to study Agricultural and Extension Education at Penn State. He completed his education by student teaching at Central HS under the guidance of Tom Ritchey. Thad believes that both teachers were a big influence on how he conducts his classes and sets his curriculum.

After receiving his teacher certificate, Thad became employed at Forbes Road Junior-Senior HS. In just a few months, Thad has focused his production-based curriculum on dairy science, small gas engines, welding, forestry/wildlife and electrical wiring. He especially enjoys teaching the forestry/wildlife curriculum because the school has a fair amount of acreage to use as an outdoor laboratory/classroom.

Even though Thad is having great success, the program is currently being restructured. As a new teacher, Thad has taken it upon himself to improve the program by understanding the needs and interests of the community and students. Though he is very happy with the enrollment numbers, he can foresee great improvements for the program. "Ultimately, I would like to have a very

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Roush Went to a Runoff for the H.O. Sargent Award



It was a tense moment for China Grove of North Carolina and Hope Roush of Millerstown, PA when the judges had to conduct a runoff to decide which individual would be the national award winner. The award recognizes an FFA member who has achieved and promoted diversity in agricultural education and the FFA. Finally the winner's name was announced...China Grove. Hope being the true sportsman commented, "I'm really proud of what I did, it was an awesome experience. I'm proud to have had the chance to represent Pennsylvania FFA and myself."

Hope first heard about the H.O. Sargent Award through her local chapter advisor, MeeCee Baker. According to Hope, "It appealed to me. I had read several stories about students who had been discriminated against and could see some of those discrimination being done to students within my own school." So, with an idea in hand, Hope decided to develop a three-prong plan.

Hope began by looking to see how she could teach diversity within the FFA Chapter. "Can You Spot the Difference" was the focus of a display she placed in the hallway of her school. When a student would look at the display he/she would see the NFA (New Farmers of America) symbol and the FFA symbol. Hope also placed a profile about the past and present African Americans who had a positive impact on agricultural education.

To take it one step further, Hope taught a diversification lesson to the Animal Science class. The class was comprised of 10th and 11th graders. She broke the class into several groups and had the groups focus on entrepreneurship, education or civic duties. At the end of the lesson the students developed a poster and shared their thoughts with the entire class. Through the partnership in the Project PALS program, Hope developed a puppet show about diversity. Not only was she able to impact her chapter members, but also younger students.

For the second part of the plan, Hope became even more creative when she designed collages of words and pictures. She entitled them "Diversity – Everyone is Unique."

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Pennsylvania Marks the 73rd National FFA Convention

“FFA – Discover the Power” was the theme for the 73rd National FFA Convention,

symbolizing the many opportunities provided by the organization to develop the potential of students for premier leadership, personal growth and career

success through agricultural education. Nearly 45,000 FFA members, advisors, supporters and guests attended the convention on October 25-28 at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center in Louisville, KY.

The national convention, representing the culmination of a year’s activities for FFA members, was an opportunity for awards and recognition, delegate business, officer elections and celebration of accomplishments. The 475 delegates representing each state conducted business and made recommendations to the national organization. The delegates focused on agricultural education trends, career success activities, chapter activities, communication and public relations, FFA publications, leadership and personal development, marketing and merchandising, membership recruitment and participation, national FFA convention and

FFA partner development.

During the convention, the FFA recognized businesses and individuals that support the organization by awarding them the Honorary American FFA Degree, Distinguished



Alicia Derr - AgriScience

Service Awards, the H.O. Sargent Award and VIP Citations. The convention showcased and honored the National FFA Foundation sponsors who raised nearly \$7.7 million this year and have provided more than \$99 million since 1944.

The FFA National Agricultural Career Show attracted more than 350 exhibitors to expose FFA members to a vast array of agricultural careers, programs and products. The exhibit hall covered 770,000 square feet, representing business and industry, colleges and universities, such as Penn State, agricultural products and services and other diverse areas that support or are part of the total FFA experience.

The Center of Professional Personnel Development congratulates the following individuals and chapters for their specific accomplishments.

Distinguished Service Citations Recipient

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

H.O. Sargent Award 2nd place

Hope Roush from Millerstown

AgriScience Fair Jr. Division 3rd place

Alicia Derr – Environmental Category, from Millerstown

AgriScience Fair Sr. Team Division 3rd place

Kirby Brookhart and Brad Minor – Environmental Category, all of Millerstown

Agricultural Mechanics 4th Place

Alex Ranck (3rd Individual), Kevin Nolt, Kris Good, and Darrel Martin all of Lancaster



Kirby Brookhart & Brad Minor - AgriScience 3rd Place Winners

More Convention Results

Agricultural Sales

7th place

Joshua Mann, Jessica Ependshade, Justin Risser, and Nathaniel Baul all of Elizabethtown

Agronomy

(Demonstration Event)

Thomas Brooks, Brandon Howard, Jesse Bitler, and Joshua Kratzer all of Oley

FFA Creed Speaking

Silver Emblem

Elizabeth Van Pelt of Dillsburg

Dairy Cattle Evaluation

37th place

Greg Stahl, Austin Walker, Susan Speelman, and Kevin Miller all of Somerset

Dairy Foods

25th place

Holly Hoover, Holly Hubbard, and Christopher Binkley all of Ephrata

Environmental and

Natural Resources

10th place

Beth Hafer (8th individual), George Loef, Elizabeth Tully, and Carlin Chestnet, Jr. all of Elverson

Extemporaneous Public

Speaking

Bronze Emblem

Jill Neiman of Oley

Farm Business Management

21st place

Jessica Landis, Kelley Reeder, Ashley Belin, and Dawn Goshorn all of Mercersburg

Floriculture

32nd place

Tracy Rosenberry, Danielle Theimer, and Brandi Foust all of Chambersburg

Forestry

20th place

Dustin Kohan, Charles Gindesperger, Todd Custer, and Ben Saylor all of Somerset

Horse Evaluation

16th place

Stacy Risser, Jennifer Slater (Top Ten Individual for Halter Placing), Jennifer Ruhl, and Stacy Hannum all of Elizabethtown

Job Interview

(Demonstration Event)

Heidi Knopsnyder and Angela Lengel

Livestock Judging

25th place

Paul Hostetter, Nathan Hoover, Jason Rohrer, and Jeremy Ranck all of Lancaster

Meats Evaluation and

Technology

35th place

Robert Garrett, Anne Dearolf, D. Lamar Stoner, and Ryan Hoover all of Millersville

Nursery and Landscape

15th place

Dakeem Hamilton, Kelly Wilson, and Alicia Simpson all of Philadelphia

Parliamentary Procedure

Bronze Emblem

Cedar Crest FFA Chapter of Lebanon

Poultry Judging

9th place

Sheila Charles (10th Individual), Andrea Hoover, Eric Musser, and Brian Oberholtzer all of New Holland

Prepared Public Speaking

Bronze Emblem

Patricia Minchhoff of Elizabethtown



Nate Jamison talking at the Penn State Career Show Booth

(White...cont'd from p. 3)

hands-on learning program.”

The Center for Professional Personnel Development welcomes Thaddeus White to the agricultural education family and wishes him the best of luck!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS.....

January 5-11..... Pennsylvania Farm Show, Harrisburg
 January 8..... FFA Mid-Winter Convention, Large Areana Farm Show Complex, 4:00 p.m.
 February 6-8 PA Young Farmer Convention, Greensburg
 February 8-10 State Project Book Evaluation, PSU AG Administration Building
 February 13-19 ... Vocational Education Week
 February 17-18 ... ACES Leadership Conference, Marriott, Harrisburg
 February 19-26 ... National FFA Week
 February 23..... FFA Association Board of Directors Mtg., 301 AG Admin. Bldg., PSU, 6:30 p.m.
 March 11-13..... SLLC, Holiday Inn, Grantville

TEACHER DEADLINES.....

December 15..... Reconfirm Entries for Farm Show Market Animals, Farm Show Office
 February 2..... Project Books due to Regional Coordinators
 February 15..... National FFA Scholarship Applications, National FFA Center
 February 26..... Membership Roster and Dues Payment Due to Mary Johnston, Adult Treasurer
 March 12..... American FFA Degress Applications Due, VSO Office

(Roush... Cont'd from p 3)

Through these creations Hope was able to educate the teachers and students of her school.

Finally, Hope focused on the community. She wrote articles to the newspaper about the award and what the purpose of her project was. Hope also had radio segments. Through all of her actions, Hope reminds people to be an example. "Teach younger people because that is how they grow to be a positive influence on their communities."

The H.O. Sargent award existed in the New Farmers of America (NFA), the former organization for African-American agriculture students, before NFA was incorporated into FFA in 1965. This award, resurrected in 1995, will continue as an annual recognition program. All applicants have been involved in agricultural education and have implemented new programs to promote agricultural diversity. Each finalist received a plaque and national recognition on October 26 at the 73rd National FFA Convention.

Money Available to Students



Applications for the 2001 National FFA scholarships are now available. The organization awards \$1.3 million in scholarships to 1,200 students each year. To be eligible, students must be FFA members and high school seniors, high school graduates entering their first year of college, or currently enrolled in college.

All applications must be postmarked by February 15. No late applications will be accepted.
 For an application, visit www.fastweb.com or call the National FFA office at 317-802-6060.

*Center for Professional
 Personnel Development
 Wishes You and Your
 Family A Happy and Safe
 Holiday Season!*



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