

Preparing Locally Advancing Globally

Illinois Agricultural Education Report 2004
www.agriculturaleducation.org

Improving and Expanding Agricultural Education Pre-kindergarten through Adult

Illinois State Board of Education

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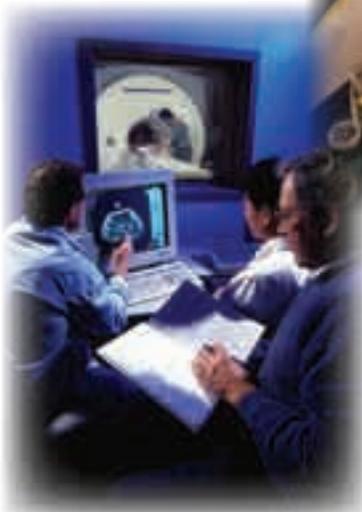
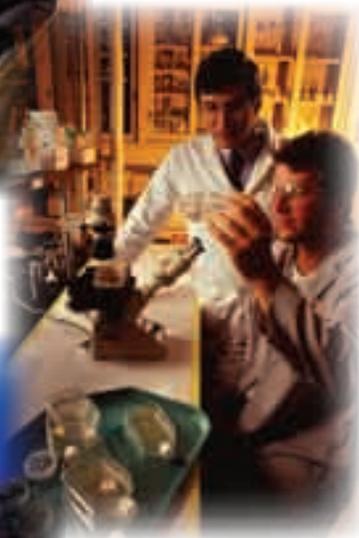
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Preparing Locally *Advancing Globally*

Jay Runner, FCAE Coordinator



Teachers lead by example and set standards of performance that guide a student's transition into adult roles at home, in the local community, or at the university. America's teachers continue to lead new generations of young people by their example, and the agricultural education teacher's sphere of influence reaches across the globe every day.

"The wealth of Illinois is in her soil and her strength lies in its intelligent development", Andrew Sloan Draper, President, University of Illinois, 1894-1904. Illinois' wealth is still in her soil, in her grain barges crossing the Atlantic, and in her graduates employed at the "ADMs" and "Board of Trades" around the globe. The advancement of global opportunities depends on the intellectual development of the population.

Intellectual development is Illinois' greatest return from agricultural education.

Agricultural education in Illinois continues to rely on the mission statement of Illinois' first agricultural education line item. In 1987, the Illinois Leadership Council for Agricultural Education (ILCAE) defined our goals:

- Promote education in and about agriculture
- Address the changing needs of agricultural education to strengthen its viability and competitiveness

- Develop a funding mechanism involving partnering of groups having an interest in agricultural education

This annual report demonstrates that a handful of boards and organizations (comprised mostly of non-paid members) have demonstrated focused leadership during the past 18 years. The data that follow are an accounting of the global returns Illinois realized in 2003-04 from the \$1,881,200 Agricultural Education line item.

What are some of the results?

Promote education in and about agriculture

- Over 25,747 high school agricultural and horticultural students and 240,086 pre-K through adult students were served by agricultural literacy activities through the Agricultural Education line item; \$7/student was allocated in the line item for agricultural education needs.



- Statewide agricultural literacy coordinators in 47 county coalitions provide agricultural awareness to 240,086 students and educators
- Twenty-seven AgriScience and AgriLearning kits have been developed and aligned to Illinois Learning Standards. These kits, developed with dollars available through the Agricultural Education line item, are used across the nation to promote agricultural knowledge and teach academic concepts.



- The five FCAE Field Advisors provided on-site technical assistance to 369 agricultural teachers and conducted 493 local school visits.

Address the changing needs of agricultural education to strengthen its viability and competitiveness

- Agricultural education leads the way in preparing students to meet Illinois Learning Standards, Occupational Skill Standards, and Workplace Skill Standards. Seven CD-ROMs with over 600 agricultural lessons have been developed and provided free of charge to Illinois agricultural teachers. Agricultural departments in 42 other states and Pakistan are using these materials to teach agricultural education while 16 states have implemented the Illinois curriculum.
- 75 percent of the 4,731 agricultural graduating seniors enter postsecondary education.
- 77% of the agricultural programs offer courses that receive academic course credit in math, science, social studies, language arts, or consumer economics.
- This past year in times of teacher shortages 59 vacancies in agricultural teaching programs were filled. Over 25 student teachers are anticipated for next year.

Develop a funding mechanism involving all groups having an interest in agricultural education

- Line item funding in the ISBE budget for Agricultural Education has increased from \$48,500 in 1987 to \$1,881,200 in 2004.
- Forty-seven county agricultural literacy coalitions received \$1,010,201 in contributions from the private sector matched with \$184,576 from the Agricultural Education line item to deliver agricultural awareness information to over 240,086 Illinois students and adults.
- Local programs annually receive an average of \$2,448 in Incentive Funding from the Agricultural Education line item to purchase state-of-the-art equipment and curriculum materials to enhance local agricultural programs.

“Despite the continuing restructuring of agricultural industries, career opportunities are excellent for young men and women, who make commitments to both formal education in their chosen areas, as well as to their own personal leadership development. The continued successful efforts of ILCAE greatly facilitate the achievement of students in both arenas.”

Charles E. Olson, Asst. Dean for Academic Programs, UIUC College of ACES

Gaining International Perspective & Experience for Ag Teachers

Seburn L. Pense
Southern Illinois University

Globalization is not a passing phenomenon according to T. Friedman (2000). Internationalizing the curriculum for agricultural education majors is an important objective for our future educators.

Agricultural teacher education programs in Illinois have already begun to offer coursework and experiences to prepare students internationally. At Illinois State University in Bloomington-Normal (ISU), Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIUC), the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), and Western Illinois University in Macomb (WIU) agricultural education teacher candidates undergo a rigorous program which includes core coursework, a battery of professional exams, early observations of classroom teaching, preparation of professional teaching portfolios, and a one semester student-teaching experience. The objective of internationalizing the curriculum has already begun through diverse methods, including studies abroad, summer internships abroad, and courses in international agriculture.

Summer Study Abroad

Four students engaging in summer travel during the 2004-05 school year include SIUC junior Fahran Robb, WIU senior Jennifer Pickett, UIUC junior Sara Hileman and ISU sophomore Kristina Wright.

As national finalist in the Equine Science Proficiency Award, Fahran Robb was given the opportunity to attend the Costa Rica Travel Seminar. She will not only experience a new culture and see new places, but will learn about agricultural practices used in Central America. "My goal is to find tools to help infuse global agriculture in my future career experiences," asserted Fahran.

Enrolled in a seven-week summer course at WIU, senior Jennifer Pickett traveled to Brazil to engage in four weeks of intensive language training and three weeks of study in sustainable agriculture. Jennifer indicated this was her first time abroad and that it is "different from anything I've ever experienced!" She further hopes to broaden her understanding of agriculture, commerce, and international trade from this experience.

Students from UIUC and ISU have traveled annually to participate in a four-week exchange program with Ecole Supérieure D' Agriculture in Angers, France. U of I graduate student Genny Schutz participated in the program during the summer of 2001 and has since returned under similar international programs. This year ISU senior Kristina Wright is part of the France exchange

program which will allow her to visit agribusinesses and farms, as well as experience sightseeing at Normandy, Paris, Versailles, Brussels and Mont St. Michel.



On-campus Courses in International Agriculture

A course titled International Agricultural Systems, offered at SIUC by Dr. W.D. Shoup, is a prime example of globalized curriculums at each of Illinois' four universities responsible for teacher preparation in Agricultural Education. Dr. Shoup's course addresses world crops, culture, international trade and policy, cross-cultural communications and technology transfer. Dr. Shoup stated, "We are doing something that most colleges are not, something very applied that cuts across every discipline. Students need to understand how the world works, because they will be working with international markets, whether they work in soybeans or for the beef industry. Future agriculture teachers need to be prepared to impart such a world perspective to their students."

SIUC Agricultural Education senior Derek Light echoed his professor's remarks when he said, "The International Ag Systems course showed us what is out there and the variety of what we can do with an agriculture degree. I can take what I've learned in the class, develop units on international agriculture, and show my students other career opportunities in agriculture that will be available to them in the future."

Critical Funding for Career & Technical Education

Richard Treat, District I FCAE Field Advisor
Mindy Bunselmeyer, District IV FCAE Field Advisor

CTE state funding for skilled workforce preparation has not kept pace with total education funding in Illinois

Various congressional appropriations, since the 1917 passage of the Smith-Hughes Act, including Carl D. Perkins Acts I, II, and III of 1984 through 2004, have been the primary sources for Career and Technical Education programs like agricultural education. The Bush administration's proposed budget for FY05 eliminated Perkins funding, but it included new legislation that would support CTE at a reduction of 25%. It also proposes that states be allowed to transfer CTE funds to Title 1, the federal program designed to improve education in low-income schools. The reason for this change (quoting the President's budget) "Vocational and technical training (or "vocational education") in our Nation's high schools has largely been an outdated relic, suitable for the classroom realities of the 1950's, instead of a dynamic, academically rigorous component of the 21st century high school. As a result, students participating in vocational education programs in our Nation's high schools are often limited to courses that offer a narrow set of job skills and poor academic preparation for college and the modern workforce."

If not for the hundreds of letters, emails and faxes from across the nation encouraging our congressional leaders to support the Perkins Act, CTE would be facing significant reductions for the 2005-2006 school year. The new proposal is entitled the "Carl D. Perkins Secondary and Technical Education Excellence Act of 2004."

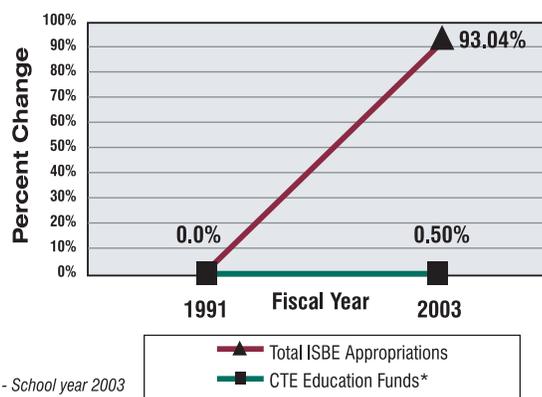
The Illinois State Board of Education received \$45,306,592 of Perkins funds for the FY04 school year. Of the total grant, 85% (\$38,510,603) went to local formula distribution with 60% to secondary programs (\$23,106,361) and 40% to post-secondary programs (\$15,404,242); 10% to state leadership (minus 1% for the Department of Corrections); and the remaining 5% to state administration. Secondary non-duplicated student enrollment for FY04 was 348,433. Postsecondary student enrollment was approximately 253,000.

How does "maintenance of effort" play in this mix of funds? The Illinois General Assembly appropriated \$38,328,700 for secondary CTE in FY04, as recommended by the proposed ISBE budget. The Perkins Act requires "maintenance of effort" (MOE) by the ISBE. MOE re-

quirements can be maintained by aggregate expenditures or fiscal effort per student. To maintain effort in a given year, a state must ensure that the previous year's effort met or exceeded the effort in the second year preceding the year for which the determination is made. For example: for FY03, the ISBE had to ensure that the effort in FY02 met or exceeded the effort in FY01 or, met fiscal effort per student. The agricultural education line item has never been included in the ISBE MOE figure. Why? Because, the line was not intended to be in the ISBE budget this long. If dropped, it would be much harder to come up with the money to meet MOE.

Why is Federal Perkins money so critical to the continuance of CTE in Illinois? If Illinois loses Carl Perkins funds, including Tech Prep funds, the total loss would be over 48.5 million, which could eliminate many secondary departments and seriously impact our community college programs. Illinois would no longer be obligated to the "maintenance of effort" requirement jeopardizing CTE funding completely. ISBE has always met the maintenance of effort requirement. However, the General Assembly has not increased CTE funding at the same pace as the overall education funding increase as reflected in table below. CTE funding has decreased by over \$4 million since 2001.

CTE & General Education Funding History



Source: ISBE - School year 2003

Over thirteen years, general education funding increased \$3,112,438,300 while CTE funding increased only \$246,009

So how does Perkins funding enhance local programs? Perkins funding can mean the difference between survival and extinction of Career and Technical Education in many of our school districts. Agricultural education programs use Perkins funds to explore new trends in

continued on page 12...

Global Planning *Creates Student Opportunities*

Ronald L. Reische,
Agricultural Education State Director, Illinois State Board of Education

Illinois' prominence as an agricultural state prompted the need for, and has led to the development of, an Agricultural Education partnership committed to improving and expanding education in and about agriculture. Agricultural leaders from all levels of Agricultural Education working together with leaders from the agricultural industry continue to create a new vision for Agricultural Education. This has led to the development of an expanding structure to implement that vision and an increasing need to identify adequate resources to fund the process. Joint ownership of the leadership agenda has resulted from involvement of business, industry, education and community representatives from the grassroots level up through the state level. Establishment of a clear direction for Agricultural Education is also impacting the search for adequate funding. Industry and community leaders are confident in supporting a system that works. State agency and legislative leaders listen when constituents attach value to proactive efforts. Members of the partnership include:

ILCAE – The Illinois Leadership Council for Agricultural Education is a voluntary, grassroots agricultural industry group focused on the expansion and improvement of Agricultural Education programs at all levels. ILCAE is primarily an advocacy group focused on legislation, funding and promotion. This group is responsible for legislation that established the Illinois Committee for Agricultural Education (ICAE) and the Agricultural Education line item in the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) budget.

ICAE – The Illinois Committee for Agricultural Education is a 13-member committee established by legislation and appointed by the Governor to advise both the Governor and the state education agency concerning Agricultural Education, Pre-K - adult. Six members must be appointed from ILCAE.

ISBE – The Illinois State Board of Education is the state agency responsible for Pre-K - 12 education, including Career and Technical Education. An agricultural education consultant serves in a supervisory, administrative capacity related to program approval, funding and regulatory requirements.

FCAE – The Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education project is supported with funds from an identified Agricultural Education line item within the ISBE budget. Project staff includes a coordinator and five district professional staff charged with improving education in and about agriculture, Pre-K - adult levels.

Team Ag Ed – Illinois Team Ag Ed is made up of the professional staffs of the ISBE, FCAE, Illinois FFA Center, and the members of the University Council for Agricultural Education (teacher educators).

Illinois FFA Center - The Illinois FFA Center is a non-governmental, state-level administrative office with two fulltime professional staff serving the Illinois Association FFA, Illinois Foundation FFA, Illinois FFA Alumni Association, and the Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers.



Illinois Foundation FFA – The Illinois Foundation FFA is a foundation established to receive and disburse funds to support quality Agricultural Education/FFA programs in Illinois.

Illinois FFA Alumni Association – The Illinois FFA Alumni Association supports and promotes the FFA organization and its activities as well as Agricultural Education at every level. The focus of the association is the local chapter affiliate.

FFA – The Illinois Association FFA is an intracurricular career and technical student organization for students enrolled in Agricultural Education programs at the junior and senior high levels.

IAVAT – The Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers is a professional organization for agricultural education teachers.

IACCAI – The Illinois Association of Community College Agriculture Instructors is a professional organization for postsecondary agricultural education teachers.

PAS – The Illinois Postsecondary Agricultural Student (PAS) Organization is a career and technical student organization for students enrolled in agricultural programs at the postsecondary level.

Statewide Agricultural Literacy Programs – Several statewide initiatives, both formal and informal, are being conducted in Illinois and include the Partners for Agricultural Literacy and Ag-in-the-Classroom. The FCAE project serves as the coordination point between these initiatives and the rest of Agricultural Education.

IDOA – The Illinois Department of Agriculture advocates for the agricultural industry, promotes agribusiness and provides the regulatory functions that benefit consumers, the agriculture industry, and the state's natural resources.

State-Level Functions for Leadership

Leadership – A function of the membership and/or leadership of ILCAE, ICAE, ISBE, FCAE, IAVAT, IACCAI, and Illinois Team Ag Ed.

Legislative Advocacy – Primarily the role of ILCAE and the teacher professional organizations (IAVAT, IACCAI)

Supervisory, Administrative, Regulatory Functions – Concentrated at the state-agency level and related to implementing leadership direction through funding, program approval, and program evaluation.

Coordination, Facilitation - Primarily, the responsibility of FCAE and IAVAT professional staff is to develop and put in place professional development, instructional materials, technical assistance and activities that advance the leadership agenda. Coordination and facilitation beyond the scope of the teacher professional organization and the career and technical student organization realm are handled primarily by the FCAE staff.



Characteristics of *Illinois Agricultural Education*

Dean Dittmar, District 5 FCAE Field Advisor

For the 3rd Year, Younger Teachers Continue to Enter the Profession...

The average age of an agriculture teacher is 39, which is 2 years younger than a year ago. Age statistics are: 30 and under - 31%, 31-40 - 19%, 41-50 - 28%, 51-60 - 20%, over 60 - 2%. The average number of years taught per teacher is 12. Thirty-six percent of our teachers have less than 5 years of experience. Professional development and mentoring will continue to be major objectives to ensure quality instructional programs.

The average age of a teacher is 39

Extended Contracts Allow for Year-Round Instruction...

The position of the agricultural teacher is unique when compared to other areas of education, in that instructors are often employed for up to 12 months allowing for year-round instruction. Extended contract lengths vary from ½ month to 3 months with 73% of teachers having an extended contract. With an extended contract, teachers repair and upgrade facilities, meet with their advisory councils and FFA Alumni members, make Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) visits, develop and improve curriculum, update skills through professional development workshops, and work with students on an individual basis.

73% of teachers have extended contracts

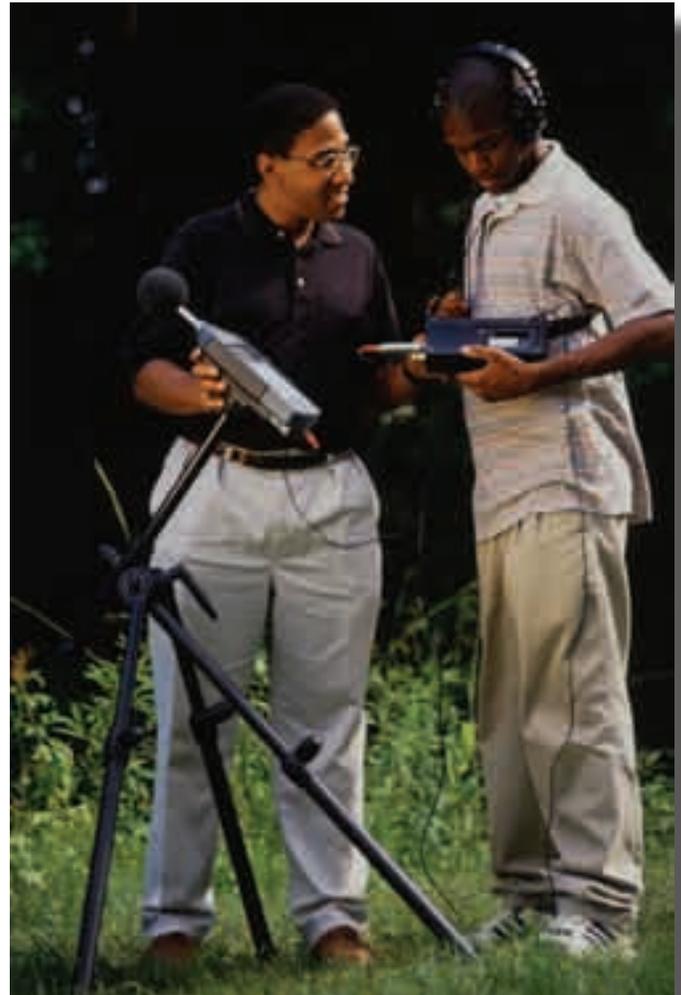
Salaries Competitive with Industry...

The average salary of a fulltime agriculture teacher is \$43,773, slightly up over a year ago. Paid benefits including health insurance, TRS, and life insurance or annuities have added to the total package. The top teacher salary reported was over \$85,000. First year salaries averaging at \$29,218 and topping out at \$43,000 are very competitive with agribusiness rates, which has helped the supply of new graduates.

The average salary of a teacher is \$43,773 plus benefits

Teachers Advance Their Education...

Forty-one percent of our teachers have a master's degree in education or agriculture; 4 teachers have their doctoral degree. With the many technical changes occur-



ring in agriculture, continued professional development is essential. Universities have assisted in providing valuable skills and techniques for teachers to enhance their teaching strategies.

41% of teachers have their Master's Degree

Number of Female Agricultural Teachers Continues to Increase at a Fast Pace...

In 1980, the first female agricultural teacher started teaching. Eighty female teachers, representing 22%, now are teaching across the state. Over one-half of these teachers have less than 5 years of experience. Female teachers have also led to the increase of female agricultural education students.

80 teachers or 22% are female

Agricultural Facilities Are Diversified...

Facilities are becoming more and more diversified into areas beyond the traditional shop and classroom. As the agricultural industry changes, so does the need for educational facilities. Facilities for computer training and greenhouse operations are continually shown as important lab components. One-fourth of all schools now have small animal and agriscience labs for veterinary assistant and biotechnology technician careers while a mechanics lab still remains an integral part of an agricultural program. Industry skills in small engine maintenance, electrical wiring, welding, and construction are in high demand.

Facility Statistics

Mechanics lab - 81%
Computer lab - 68%
Greenhouse - 68%
Land/plant labs - 60%
Landscaping area - 54%
Aquaculture lab - 40%
Agriscience lab - 34%
Garden area - 26%
Small animal lab - 24%
Nursery area - 10%
Large animal lab - 5%

The average incentive grant is \$2,448 per school

Incentive Grant Funding Leverages Local Dollars...

Annually schools with agricultural departments receive additional funding through an incentive grant. The average grant was \$2,448 with a top grant of \$5,000. Funding through this grant helps to leverage local dollars from the school, FFA, FFA Alumni, and business/industry. Department funding is used for: computer equipment, greenhouses, horticultural and agriscience supplies, ag. mechanics equipment and supplies, teacher salaries, travel, audiovisual materials and equipment, software, and printed instructional materials. Incentive funding has saved many agricultural programs and has allowed for upgrades and enhancements of curriculum and equipment. Eighteen percent of programs had an increase in their total department budget.

Incentive Funding Breakdown

Computer/Audiovisual Equipment - 33%
Curriculum Materials - 17%
Ag Mechanics Equipment 16.4%
Horticulture Equipment - 6.5%
Laboratory Facilities Improvements - 6.4%
Salaries - 6.1%
AgriScience Equipment - 5.2%
Computer software - 4.2%
Computer Services - 3%
Registration Fees - 1.4%
Professional Services - .4%
Travel - .4%

Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) Provides Career Exploration...

9,601 students were involved with a SAE and earned \$9,540,107. SAE is an integral part of agricultural education programs. Students are gaining valuable work experience, exploring career opportunities, and earning dollars for college and living expenses. SAE is often overlooked as a valuable economic asset to school districts and communities.

SAEs strengthened local economic development by 9.5 million dollars

Agricultural Education Departments Receive On-Site Technical Support...

It can be very frustrating at times to receive assistance via email or the telephone. The primary component of improving programs has been for teachers to receive assistance at their school face to face from a FCAE Field Advisor. Agricultural education teachers received assistance with their curriculum, state standards, course offerings, funding, advisory council, FFA Alumni, student discipline, classroom organization, SAE record books, FFA activities, facilities, and requirements relating to the "No Child Left Behind" legislation. The five FCAE field advisors made 493 school on-site assistance sessions, an increase of 107 over last year. On-site assistance is provided to the teacher, students, administration, and school staff. Meetings with school board members, parents, and community leaders are also part of the assistance provided by FCAE Field Advisors.

On-site assistance helps schools in "leaving no child behind"

Addressing NCLB through

Achievement Driven Curriculum

Mindy Porter, District II FCAE Field Advisor &
Jess Smithers, District III FCAE Field Advisor



In a world of achievement tests, standards, and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, schools are faced with greater accountability than ever before. As school districts strive to meet the benchmarks set by NCLB, agricultural educators are helping to meet those standards by utilizing the academically rigorous, standards-aligned Illinois Agricultural Core Curriculum. The nationally-recognized instructional materials are designed to improve student competencies in all learning areas.

Curriculum Materials Available at the Fingertips of Illinois Agricultural Teachers

With the recent completion of the Biological Science Applications in Agriculture (BSAA) CD, teachers now have access to over 600 lesson plans, all of which are linked to the state academic learning standards. The Illinois Agricultural Core Curriculum is distributed to Illinois Agricultural Programs on 7 CDs—Central Core (Agriscience), Horticulture, Agribusiness Management, Agricultural Mechanics & Technology, Animal, Plant & Soil Science, Environmental Science, and Biological Science Applications in Agriculture.

PowerPoint presentations, academic assessments, sample course outlines, and an on-line course planning matrix are at the fingertips of Illinois agricultural educators through the website, www.agriculturaleducation.org

Assessments Designed to Assess Academic Competencies

Performance-based, academic assessments continue to be written by Illinois agricultural educators to complement the Illinois Agricultural Core Curriculum. These academic assessments supply teachers with an additional tool to challenge students as they learn about agriculture, as well as assist teachers in charting yearly academic progress of students towards mastery of Illinois Learning Standards. In collaboration with Education For Employment system directors, FCAE field advisors conducted numerous workshops for agricultural teachers on the use of academic assessments in their classrooms. These workshops armed teachers with the knowledge of how to implement performance-based assessments as a more rigorous evaluation tool in their classrooms.

Illinois' Agricultural Core Curriculum Continues to Gain Recognition Nationwide

Illinois' Core Curriculum for secondary agricultural teachers continues to gain recognition nationwide as the curriculum has been purchased in 42 states by individual agriculture programs with 16 states adopting the curriculum in its entirety. In addition, the curriculum has been utilized in Pakistan for the instruction of adult education courses. Illinois continues to serve as a leader in agricultural education nationwide with innovative curriculum development projects every year.

The Illinois Agricultural Education Curriculum is now being used in 42 states and Pakistan

PSAA and BSAA Course Materials Planned for Revision

The Physical Science Applications in Agriculture (PSAA) curriculum materials are slated for revision this year. This laboratory intensive course, along with Biological Science Applications in Agriculture (BSAA), was developed by the University of Illinois and is accepted by nine universities in the midwest for laboratory science admissions requirements. The supporting textbook for the BSAA curriculum is undergoing a complete revision and will be available in 2005. This textbook is closely tied with the BSAA curriculum CD.



Six Illinois Agricultural Programs Participate in WorkKeys Pilot Project

WorkKeys, a comprehensive workforce development system, measures skills that employers determined critical to job success, assesses students' current workplace skill levels, and assists educators and businesses in ensuring that students graduate prepared for jobs in the workplace. The goal of the Illinois WorkKeys pilot project is to obtain baseline data on students as they enter agricultural programs and assess their growth as they progress through their education. The project is being conducted with the assistance of Jack Reese, ACT Midwest Region Director, Mike Massie, ILCAE vice-chair, Anna Ball, Assistant Professor in Agricultural Education at the University of Illinois, secondary agricultural teachers, and the FCAE staff.

Career awareness activities and agriculture scholarship information is available to students and Career Counselors at www.agriculturaleducation.org/guidance/

AgriScience and AgriLearning Kits Continue to Aid Pre K-8 Educators

Illinois Agricultural Education curriculum projects reach into elementary classrooms with 94% of Illinois counties having loan locations for educators to utilize the 27 different AgriScience and AgriLearning kits free to the local school. These kits are designed to enhance local academic curriculum while providing hands-on learning activities.

Over 240,000 Pre-K through Adult students were introduced to agriculture through literacy activities in these kits

Critical Funding for *Career & Technical Education*

...continued from page 6

research in the agriculture industry. Locally, CTE teams comprised of industry representatives and instructors in the areas of agriculture, industrial technology, business, physical health and development, and family and consumer science prioritize the needs of the students, school and community. Their goal is to determine how to effectively spend the funds earned by the CTE programs. Developing aquaculture, hydroponics and landscaping laboratories help agriculture programs expose students to the cutting edge of agricultural technology. Career day speakers and job shadowing programs are other CTE initiatives.

The dollars invested in these programs enhance the classroom instruction by engaging students in career planning activities and develop interpersonal and communication skills. Providing students opportunities to experience career options prior to employment or post-secondary education is priceless. Perkins funding makes a difference one student at a time through the Career and Technical Education programs. Ask yourself, what is more rewarding than discovering and understanding the value of your education? Career and Technical Education provides that opportunity by allowing students to plan a career course or discover a career interest.

The Education For Employment System Directors can provide information regarding the CTE allocations school districts receive. Contact your legislators to inform them of the importance of continued Perkins funding.



Experiencing Agriculture *Outside of the U.S.*

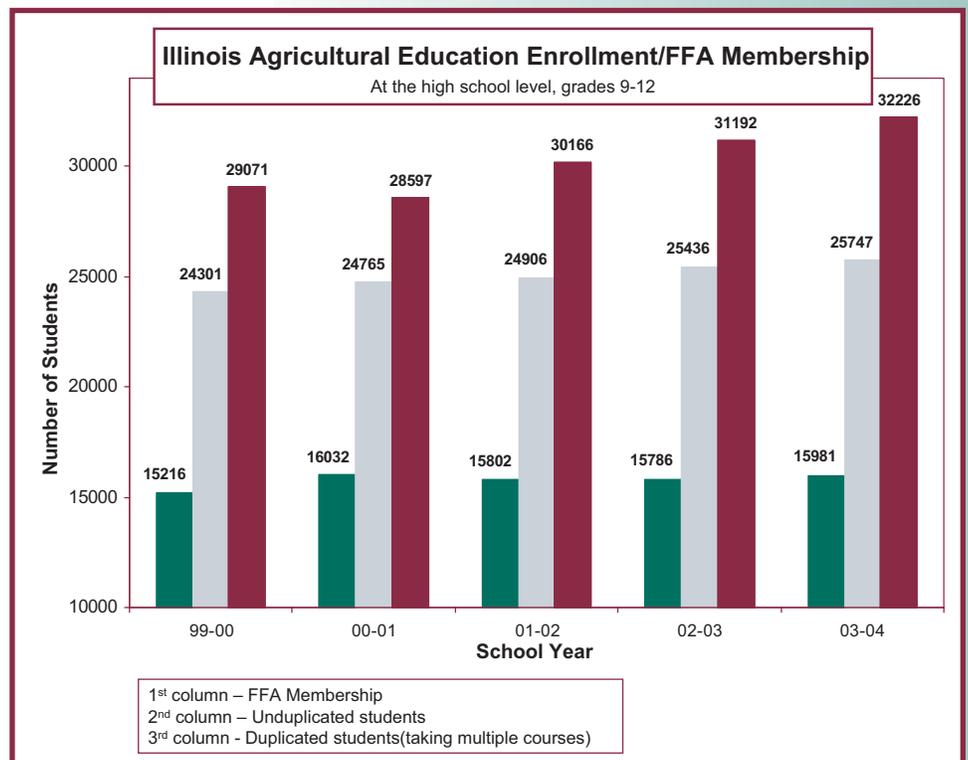
Ryan Robinson, State FFA President & Bruce Frank, State FFA Secretary



Upon returning, I have shared the differences and similarities of European and U.S. agriculture. Who would have thought, that by taking agriculture classes and being involved in the FFA, I would be given the opportunity to experience foreign countries! This is a trip that I will remember throughout my entire life!

Imagine yourself walking amongst the lush plant life and abundant wildlife of the rainforest or riding a 7-person raft across a class 3 rapid on a raging river. These are just a few amazing experiences that accompany international travel through agricultural education and the FFA. I never had an opportunity to travel to a foreign country until my agricultural education class. As a part of the National FFA Proficiency Award program, I took part on a 10-day journey to Costa Rica. Coming from a midwestern farm in central Illinois that raises corn, soybeans, cattle, and swine, I was able to see many similarities and differences. In the U.S., rolling prairies and high-tech equipment are vital to the success of an operation, the landscape of Costa Rica marveled steep hills and mountains and the use of oxen to till the soil. As corn and soybeans are plentiful crops in Illinois, farmers in this rugged country grow coffee, bananas, yucca, sugar cane, and heart of palm. This experience was a personal highlight for me as I was able to get an insight on the day to day workings of a family living in a different culture. Agricultural education and the FFA can take you to places you never dreamed.

As a state officer in the National FFA Organization, you are able to experience many different opportunities. One of my most profound experiences was the International Leadership Seminar for State Officers (ILSSO) trip to Europe. Forty six state officers toured England, Belgium, Germany, and the Czech Republic. For 17 days, I saw numerous tourist attractions, and experienced daily agricultural life while staying with host families. This was a unique experience seeing first-hand the difference between European and American agriculture. Owning a 150-acre farm in Germany is almost unheard of, and very rare. The most memorable part of the trip was Terezin, a concentration camp in the Czech Republic experiencing what the Jewish prisoners endured. Seeing this brought reality to what I had learned in high school. We also toured dairy, vegetable, swine farms, and the second oldest horse farm in Europe! Touring these farms broadened our knowledge of those products and foreign agriculture.



Agricultural Education Facts:

- In 2004, there were 8,677 (or 34%) female and 54.3% urban residents of the 25,747 non-duplicated agriculture students. Only 17% live on farms where the family depends on the farm for a living.
- Non-duplicated agricultural student numbers continue to increase: 2000 – 24,301; 2001 – 24,765; 2002--24,906; 2003 – 25,436; 2004 – 25,747 representing a 6% increase since 2000.
- Professional Development Plans have been implemented by 82% of the agricultural teachers.
- June 2004 IAVAT Professional Development workshops were attended by 80% of the agricultural teachers.
- 57% of the CTE students continue their education after high school: 75% of the 4,731 agriculture graduating seniors continued their education after high school.
- 77% of the agricultural programs received academic course credit in math, science, social studies, language arts, or consumer economics.
- CTE Associate Degree individuals earn 20-30% more than high school graduates.
- 73% of the agricultural programs offer leadership development through planned FFA activities integrated in all their classes.
- K-8 Agriscience kits have been utilized by 53% of the secondary programs for agricultural awareness activities.
- Advisory Councils are utilized by 66% of the agricultural programs.
- The five FCAE Field Advisorys made 493 school on-site assistance sessions to the 369 agricultural teachers.



Illinois State Board of Education

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Interim State Superintendent

An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

Supplemental Funds for Agricultural Education and the FCAE Project

1987 - \$ 48,500	1997 - \$ 1,299,000
1988 - \$ 48,500	1998 - \$ 1,429,700
1989 - \$ 1,000,000	1999 - \$ 1,500,000
1990 - \$ 1,040,000	2000 - \$ 2,000,000
1991 - \$ 1,040,000	2001 - \$ 2,000,000
1992 - \$ 1,040,000	2002 - \$ 1,950,000
1993 - \$ 1,040,000	2003 - \$ 1,881,200
1994 - \$ 1,081,600	2004 - \$ 1,881,200
1995 - \$ 1,081,600	2005 - \$ 1,881,200
1996 - \$ 1,181,600	