

Agriculture Teacher Exit Survey for the Year 2006
 Respectively Submitted by:
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 Project Director

The data collection stage of this project successfully yielded 11 usable surveys out of a possible 15. The actual response rate for this project was 73%. The project director determined there were 16 individuals that decided to leave the profession after the 2005-2006 academic year, out of the actual 41 state-wide openings. The project director was able to locate addresses for 15 out of the 16 individuals to be utilized for data collection. The individual that lacked contact information, left their position after the first month of employment, so they were eliminated from the database. The below table outlines district responses and the number of individuals identified to collect exit data.

District	Individuals Identified	# Surveys Collected	Response Rate
1	2	2	100%
2	4	2	50%
3	2	2	100%
4	4	4	100%
5	3	1	33%
Totals	15	11	73%

Each individual was sent a survey instrument utilized to collect perceptual data on reasons for leaving the profession of agricultural education. Along with the survey was a cover letter that introduced them to why the state is trying to collect this data. The survey and cover letter was sent with a self-addressed, stamped return envelope to ensure a quick response. If a survey was completed and returned, a thank you letter was sent to that individual to thank them for their time. The data collection ended after three rounds were sent. The first of round of surveys were sent on August 21st, 2006 and the final round of surveys was sent on September 29th, 2006.

The results indicated that the respondents had an average of 6.36 years of teaching experience and 5 years of experience within their current school district. However, by reviewing the non-respondents, these averages would decline if data would have been collected from non-respondents. Our speculation that individuals that exit the profession usually have 5 years or less experience is correct according to the data retrieved. Demographic data also indicated that 55% (n=6) of the respondents were male and 45% (n=5) were female. The results indicated some surprising data that 91% (n=10) of the respondents were fully certified and 9% (n=1) were provisionally certified.

The following 17 variables were ranked according to their impact on the decision to leave the profession. It is important to note that there were only 9 respondents, so averages can be swayed greatly by each respondent. The following table illustrates each variable on its impact on the decision-making process. The first variable had the greatest impact and the last variable had the least impact on their decision. The table also illustrates the frequency of respondents that identified that variable as a reason to leave the profession. The respondents had to rank each variable by placing a "1" by the variable that had the

greatest impact on their decision and then descend through “17” from there for the remaining applicable variables. The variables with the smallest mean had the greatest impact.

Variable	Mean	Frequency
Was not offered a contract for 06-07	1.00	n=2 (18%)
Other (identified a specific variable)	1.50	n=2 (18%)
Family/personal reason	2.00	n=6 (55%)
Too many out-of-classroom expectations	2.44	n=7 (64%)
Salary does not reflect effort	2.50	n=4 (36%)
Discipline problems	4.20	n=5 (45%)
Salary not competitive	4.50	n=4 (36%)
Limited administrative support	4.75	n=4 (36%)
Lack of time and/or resources	5.20	n=5 (45%)
Long commute	6.25	n=4 (36%)
Change of heart about teaching	6.33	n=3 (27%)
Lack of parent/community support	6.75	n=4 (36%)
Felt unprepared	7.25	n=4 (36%)
Lack support from colleagues	9.00	n=2 (18%)
Lack of for professional development opportunities	11.00	n=2 (18%)

Variables Identified as not Impacting their Decision	Frequency
Health-related	n=0
Lacked proper credentials	n=0

It is important to note again that these rankings and means can be skewed easily, due to the nominal amount of respondents (n=11). It is also important that respondents had the opportunity to select variables as “Not Applicable” if that variable had no bearing on their decision to leave the profession that is why you see the differences in frequencies. As a researcher, it is important that all of the 15 identified variables be reviewed to better understand how the respondents reacted to each item. The variables that need the most attention are the ones with the greatest frequency.

Too many expectations out-of-the-classroom and personal/family reasons are the variables that need attention. Respondents that indicated personal/family reasons identified maternity leaves and additional stress on family as items that impacted their decision. These two variables are closely related. Individuals are trying to indicate to us that family can impact or limit their effectiveness as an agriculture instructor. Too many outside expectations are impacting their decision to continue in the teaching profession. Salary also has a great impact on their decision to stay within the profession as indicated in table. By reducing the outside expectations, individuals may begin to feel like they can have a family and be an effective teacher as well as bring home a representative paycheck. It is also important that these individuals who decided to leave the profession were people that we brought through the system as fully certified teachers. They should have been aware of these expectations, but were somehow surprised by reality.