

Illinois Agriculture Teacher Exit Survey for the Year 2007  
 Respectively Submitted by:  
 Dr. Andrew J. Baker  
 Project Director

The data collection stage of this project successfully yielded 14 usable surveys out of a possible 15. The actual response rate for this project was 93%. The project director determined there were 15 individuals that decided to leave the profession in 2007. There were 55 actual state-wide openings. The project director was able to locate personal information for 15 out of the 15 individuals to be utilized for data collection. Once the data collection stage was completed, there was one individual that did not respond to the survey after two attempts. The below table outlines district responses and the number of individuals identified to collect exit data.

District	Individuals Identified	# Surveys Collected	Response Rate
1	1	1	100%
2	3	3	100%
3	2	2	100%
4	5	4	80%
5	4	4	100%
Totals	15	14	93%

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 two attempts of correspondence with these individuals. The overall response rate was 93% lacking only one individual out of 15 individuals. The response rate increased 20% from last year's response rate, which is an excellent return for any mailed survey. The first of round of surveys were sent on August 10th, 2007 and the final round of surveys was sent on August 24th, 2007.

The results indicated that the respondents had an average of 8.57 years (6.36 years in 2006) of teaching experience and 5.28 years (5 years in 2006) of experience within their current school district. This year's group possessed more years of teaching experience than last year's group. This year's group also had five individuals that had 10+ years of teaching experience, which is alerting. Demographic data also indicated that 57% (n=8) of the respondents were male and 43% (n=6) were female. The results indicated some surprising data that 86% (n=12) of the respondents were fully certified and 14% (n=2) 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 14 respondents, so averages can be swayed 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 based upon the overall mean for each variable. The table also illustrates the frequency of respondents that identified that variable as a reason to leave the profession. The respondents had the opportunity 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 (2007 Group N=14) 93% Response Rate	Mean		Frequency
Family/personal reason	2.00	T1	n=8 (57%)
Was not offered a contract for 06-07	2.00	T1	n=1 ( 7%)
Discipline problems	2.50	3rd	n=4 (29%)
Too many out-of-classroom expectations	2.87	4th	n=8 (57%)
Change of heart about teaching	3.66	5th	n=3 (21%)
Other (identified a specific variable)	3.77	6th	n=9 (64%)
Salary does not reflect effort	3.85	7th	n=7 (50%)
Long commute	4.00	8th	n=5 (36%)
Lack of time and/or resources	4.66	9th	n=3 (21%)
Salary not competitive	5.75	10th	n=4 (29%)
Limited administrative support	6.00	11th	n=1 ( 7%)
Lack of parent/community support	6.50	12th	n=2 (14%)
Felt unprepared	10.00	T13	n=1 ( 7%)
Health-related	10.00	T13	n=1 ( 7%)

Variables Identified as not Impacting their Decision	Frequency
Lack support from colleagues	n=0
Lack of for professional development	n=0
Lacked proper credentials	n=0

You can compare the differences among the 2006 and 2007 groups.

Variable (2006 Group N=11) 73% Response Rate	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	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, due to the nominal amount of respondents (n=14). 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 14 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.

Frequencies are more important than the overall mean to truly evaluate how these variables impact the decision to leave the profession. Family/personal reasons, too many out-of-classroom expectations, salary does not reflect effort, and “other” variables appear to rise to the top based upon frequency rates. Family/personal reasons and out-of-classroom expectations are two variables that are truly highlighted among the two groups for the past two years. It is imperative that state leadership try to assist with these two variables to help eliminate these items as reasons for leaving the profession. On a positive note, the respondents indicated that professional development activities, support from colleagues, and the lack of proper credentials did not impact their decision to leave the profession. Each of these variables were not identified as items that impacted their decision.

The demographic data indicates that five (36%) out of the thirteen respondents will remain in the field of education, but not in Agricultural Education. These respondents have either moved into administrative positions or moved into IT positions. These respondents made it clear in their written comments that the out-of-classroom expectations are lower and/or they will be paid more fairly on their efforts in their new positions than their position as agricultural instructor. More important the demographic data also illustrates that this group are in the prime of their teaching careers. The average is almost 9 years of teaching experience. We would consider this group to be well established in the profession and many have held leadership roles within IAVAT.