

NEWS & VIEWS

Volume XLVINO. 4

July/August 2008

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATORS, INC.

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Ray Nash, NAAE Region V Vice President, with Travis Childers, U.S. Congressman representing the 1st district of Mississippi

Mentoring

Experienced mentors tell us why it works, why they do it, and how it's changed them for the better

Teaching agriculture is a challenging, sometimes daunting career choice. It brings tasks and opportunities that are different than those that any other educator faces, and it is easy for new teachers to sometimes feel like they are fighting an uphill battle all alone.

At its heart, mentoring is simply reaching out to our colleagues and giving them a hand. Whether it's by sharing tricks of the trade or inviting them to participate in the professional association, reminding a teacher that they're not alone can mean the difference between a successful career or a decision to leave the profession after a few years.

"Mentoring does not have to be formal, and maybe should not even be called mentoring. Just being available when needed is what is important"
--Myron Sonne, 2007 Outstanding Mentor

That is why, if we truly want to recruit and retain enough agricultural educators to fulfill the goal of having 10,000 quality agricultural education programs by 2015, mentoring is critical. Lots of states have formalized mentoring systems, and several even have programs specifically for agricultural educators, but it doesn't take paperwork and a day of special training for you to help out your colleague. Mentoring can happen at any career stage, and in any setting.

"For the same reason I teach, I mentor. I enjoy helping people and making them better at what they do."
--Mark Ketelhut, 2005 Outstanding Mentor

Here are perspectives on mentoring from four agricultural educators who have been recognized by NAAE in the past five years as outstanding mentors. By their own estimates, these four have mentored around

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Thinking about running for a NAAE Office?

Anyone running for NAAE Regional Secretary, Regional VP, President-elect or President **MUST** submit a signed Memorandum of Understanding to the NAAE office by **September 15, 2008** in order to be eligible. Download a MOU at: <http://www.naae.org/membership/stateleaders>

Mentoring

continued from front page

200 new ag teachers, most of whom have stayed in the profession.

MYRON SONNE

Sonne describes himself as a people person, a trait that he thinks makes it easier for him to be a mentor. His experience mentoring has been on a more informal basis, although he has participated in some structured mentoring activities at his school. He sees positives with both methods, although he feels that the structure of a formal mentoring program helps ensure that teachers are reached in a timely manner. Sonne pointed out that participation in his state association allows him to interact with many teachers at all points in their careers.

“Mentoring does not have to be formal, and maybe should not even be called mentoring,” Sonne said. “Just being available when needed is what is important. I feel good when I have something worthwhile to share with an interested party.”

HALS BEARD

Beard began mentoring because he loves to see young teachers succeed. Beard feels that mentoring allows him to share many of his experiences that have been both successful and not so successful. Beard’s mentoring experiences helped him become a better teacher, and have impacted his career so much that as a state program specialist, he is currently working to establish a formal agriculture teacher induction program in Louisiana.

BARRY HAWKINS

Hawkins said that when he started teaching, he needed a lot of help. Other teachers were glad to lend a hand, and he feels that he is simply returning the favor, now that he is more experienced. Hawkins believes that mentoring is most effective when done on an informal basis, because the mentee knows that the mentor is truly sincere in their efforts.

continued on pg. 3



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JOHN DEERE

Mentoring

MARK KETELHUT

When asked why he mentors, Ketelhut replied, "I guess it just comes naturally. For the same reason I teach, I mentor. I enjoy helping people and making them better at what they do." Ketelhut said that mentoring and involvement with NAAE has made his career more fulfilling because it has allowed him to associate with teachers at all points in their careers. His own career has been shaped by those agricultural educators who mentored him, beginning with his very own high school ag teacher.

The next time you are at a conference or meeting with other ag educators, take a look around. Who's new? Or who's not there? Make a connection with someone. Everyone has something to give, so you may find that you're being mentored without even realizing it.

NAAE provides resources to help members interested in mentoring

NAAE WEBSITE

Developed to help anyone become a mentor, and to give examples of how mentoring works in a variety of states, this section of the NAAE website can serve as a great resource for anyone who wants to get involved.

Use our [List of Mentoring & New Teacher Induction Programs by State](http://www.naae.org/links/mentoring/states.htm) (<http://www.naae.org/links/mentoring/states.htm>) to see how different states support their early career teachers, and to get contacts for programs that interest you.

NATIONAL TEACHER INDUCTION AND MENTORING WEBSITE

A special project of The National Council for Ag Education, this site is devoted to understanding the challenges faced by new agricultural educators and exploring how to overcome them. The site features research, practical advice, and lots of links to other teacher mentoring resources.

<http://teacherinduction.cfans.umn.edu/default.htm>

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Teacher Induction & Mentoring Community

A place on the web where anyone interested in mentoring and induction for agricultural educators can post questions, discuss topics, or share resources. <http://naae.ca.uky.edu:8080/clearspacex/community/induction>

New Teacher Community

New to the profession? Here's a place where you can post questions, share resources, and connect with others who are in your shoes. <http://naae.ca.uky.edu:8080/clearspacex/community/newteacher>

Student Teaching/Preservice Community

Whether you're getting ready to graduate or have just decided on your major, the Student Teaching/Preservice community is for you. Ask questions in a comfortable environment filled with students who are making their way towards the same goal you are. This community is also facilitated by a Teacher Educator who provides lots of advice, support, and encouragement. <http://naae.ca.uky.edu:8080/clearspacex/community/studentteaching>

Note: You can view items on NAAE's Communities of Practice without logging in, but to participate, you must become a registered user (it's free). Look for the "Register" link near the top of the page.



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President's Message

An Influx of New Teachers Means Mentoring is More Critical Than Ever



*Harold Eckler
2007-08
NAAE President*

Today more than 23 percent of our teachers have less than five years of experience, and we can expect this number to grow. Why? The expansion of programs caused by the 10x15 initiative and the retirement of a large number of veteran teachers is going to increase demand in a way that we haven't seen before. The next problem is that too many young teachers leave the profession after only two or three years because they are overwhelmed by the demands placed on them. It can be intimidating and daunting to try to cope with the mind-boggling amount of responsibility and sheer number of different tasks that we as agricultural educators are expected to accomplish within scope of our jobs.

As an organization and as individuals, we must think about what we can do to help these young teachers meet the challenges they face during their early years. We can help them become successful professionals.

New teachers face a great deal of uncertainty as they start their career. Many questions arise over the course of the first year in regards to what they should be doing and how they should be doing it. There are a multitude of other questions regarding curriculum, student management, teaching strategies, professional development, community involvement, FFA, CDEs and the list goes on. You can help by being available to answer the many questions that a new teacher might ask, pointing them in the right direction, or sometimes just listening.

The responsibility for the mentor-mentee relationship doesn't just lie with the mentee. The mentor must also take an active role in the relationship-building process by inviting the new teacher to join in the normal activities associated with agricultural education in their area and encouraging them to take advantage of the professional development opportunities that are available.

Building a relationship with new teachers is essential. People usually won't share concerns or ask questions of people that they don't know, so get to know the new teacher on a personal level.

One question that experienced teachers often ask themselves is, "Why should I get involved?" Fears of not having enough time or not having the answers to the questions that will be asked are also on many of our minds. Serving as a mentor, whether through a formal mentoring program or informally by helping a neighbor, is the right thing to do. It's not just about helping the new teacher; it's about helping the profession. As the profession experiences a substantial influx of new teachers, mentoring is a way for veteran teachers to reinforce the culture that has been established over time. It's also a great way to guide these individuals in regards to accepted professional behavior and ethics.

Many of us would not be in education today if but not for the help of an experienced teacher who was willing to give us the time and attention to make us feel a part of agricultural education and help us through our times of uncertainty. So do your part and pass on your experiences to our new teachers.

More than 23 percent of our teachers have less than 5 years of experience

NAAE has lots of great information about mentoring on its website at

www.naae.org/links/mentoring.

You can find information on how to get started as a mentor, plus state mentoring programs for new agricultural educators.

NAAE Communities of Practice

NAAE's professional networking site for ag educators is growing. Since it started a few months ago, more and more ag educators from all over the country have discovered this new way to share information and pick the brains of the people who know the most about what it's like to run a successful ag education program – each other!

Haven't gotten around to trying out Communities yet? Keep an eye out at your state ag teachers' meeting this summer. Users and facilitators will be out and about, showing off Communities and talking about why you should sign up. Give them a minute, and you'll be convinced that Communities is something you need. Better yet, log on today and check out all the new resources that people have posted.

COMMUNITIES

We all know that agricultural education encompasses a huge range of topics. You can't be an expert in everything, so why not draw on the expertise of folks in the profession? Each community is facilitated by an agricultural education professional who has an interest in that community's topic. Click on the community's title below to check it out!

- [Advanced Life Sciences](#)
- [Advocacy](#)
- [Ag Economics](#)
- [Ag Communications & Leadership](#)
- [Ag Literacy](#)
- [Ag Mechanics](#)
- [Agriscience](#)
- [Animal Sciences](#)
- [Classroom Dynamics](#)
- [Farm Business Management](#)
- [Floral Design](#)
- [Horticulture/Greenhouse Management](#)
- [Marketing Your Ag Program](#)
- [Middle School Programs](#)
- [New Teachers](#)
- [National Board Certification](#)
- [National Quality Program Standards](#)
- [Natural Resources](#)
- [Question for the Profession](#)
- [SAE](#)
- [Student Teaching](#)
- [Teacher Induction & Mentoring](#)
- [Technology in the Classroom](#)

Haven't tried it yet? Here are some reasons why you should

Recently Posted Resources

- [Making Fruit Roll-ups lab](#)
- [Making Plastic from Corn](#)

Recently Posted Discussions:

- [Recruiting & involving Hispanic students & parents](#)
- [Ideas for recruiting ag teachers](#)
- [Topics for the Agricultural Education Magazine](#)

Click the item to be taken to that topic in Communities of Practice. You can view and download anything in Communities without logging in, but to contribute or ask questions, you must be a registered user. Sign up! It's fast and free.

Volunteers needed

Want to help with Communities?

email jfritsch.naae@uky.edu

2008 NAAE Convention



2008 NAAE CONVENTION



PROFESSIONALS IN OVERDRIVE

Get ready for the best NAAE convention yet, with better professional development, more networking opportunities, and the same great energy that you've come to expect.

REGISTRATION

NAAE members will pay one fee and have access to both the ACTE and NAAE conventions. We plan NAAE convention activities so participants can attend both programs.

ACTE handles registration for both conventions. There are two ways to register:

Download, print and fill out the registration form. Return it to ACTE using the directions on the form.

Register and pay online at ACTE's secure site. (You must register as a user on ACTE's site before you can access convention registration.)

Important!! When you're filling out your registration...

Select Agricultural Education (AGR)/NAAE on part A, "Field of Specialization."

Step 3 — Registration and Option Rates — only choose the NAAE option if you are a member of NAAE, but NOT a member of ACTE. If you belong to both, choose the ACTE option (\$285 early bird).

HOUSING & TRAVEL

We will be staying at the Blake Hotel in Charlotte. Rooms are \$130/night, single or double occupancy, plus tax.

For reservations, contact the Blake Hotel at 888-664-6835, and tell them you are with the NAAE Convention, December 2-6, to ensure that you receive convention rates. For more about the Blake, visit its website (www.theblakehotel.net).

To find out more about Charlotte, check out the "Official Visit Charlotte website (www.visitcharlotte.com)."

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We had even more submissions than ever for professional development workshops this year. That means we've been able to choose only the best offerings for convention. We'll post a complete workshop listing on our website once it's finalized, so keep your eyes peeled!

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- **Landscape Plant Selection, Soil Preparation & Planting** (DVD #5012, 37 min)
- **Lawns in the Landscape** (DVD #5013, 33 min)
- **Perennials in the Landscape** (DVD #5014, 38 min)
- **An Introduction to Plant Propagation** (DVD #5015, 91 min)

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Convention information

www.naae.org

- Registration
- Schedule
- Housing & Travel
- Committee Chairs
- ACTE/NAAE Speakers
- Professional Development

(coming soon)

(click the item to access that web page)

2008 NAAE CONVENTION



Finding & Getting a Great Grant

Tips to help even the busiest ag educator find additional funding for his or her program

Providing hands-on learning experiences for our students doesn't come cheap. You need funds for materials, labs, equipment and field trips. Applying for grants can be a great way to offset the cost of providing a first-rate experience for your students, but finding the right grant and filling out the application can take a lot of time – something that most of us don't have. However, unless you have a fairy godmother who is willing to dole out money to your program at the beginning of every school year, grants can be a good way to supplement your budget. Here are a couple of tips that might help you ease the pain of filling out those grant applications:

FIND A GOOD SOURCE:

There are websites out there that do nothing but find and list grants. To get you started, check out the one at *Education Week*. You can find both grants and teacher awards on the list. Access it at <http://www.edweek.org/ew/section/grants/index.html>.

THINK BIG:

Small grants are great, but wouldn't it be awesome to get \$30,000 for your program? Those grants are out there, and you are every bit as eligible for them as the next person. Don't sell yourself short by not applying for a grant just because you think it's too big. Also, think creatively when you apply for grants. Agricultural education covers a lot of territory, from community service to hard science, to trades, so take a close look at the requirements. You will probably find that you are eligible for a wide variety of grants.

CHECK THE REQUIREMENTS:

Some grants have very specific eligibility requirements. Don't do all the work of filling out an application just to have it rejected on a technicality. Look over the requirements very carefully before you start. Also make sure you check out the requirements for what you must do AFTER you are awarded the grant. Some grants require follow up reports, some require you to blog about your project, some even require visits from the granting organization. Assume that you'll get the grant, and make sure you're willing to do whatever follow-up is required.

GET ORGANIZED:

When you find a grant that looks promising, take 15 minutes to come up with a timeline for getting the application filled out and turned in. Include time for gathering support materials, writing a narrative, having your grant reviewed, and the final deadline. Break the tasks into small enough chunks that when the reminder pops up, you will be able to complete that portion of the grant in a day or two. Completing an application is much easier if you break it up into little tasks, instead of frantically trying to start and finish it all in a day or two.

GET HELP:

Delegate, delegate, delegate. Once you've identified the

individual tasks that have to be completed to complete the application, ask yourself who can help you get those tasks done? A fellow teacher? A student helper? Also, be sure to ask a couple of people whose opinions you trust to review your application and give you suggestions once it's complete. Another teacher is good, but think outside the classroom for a fresh perspective. There's probably a member of your advisory council or a program alum who would love to help out. And give them a short deadline – that will ensure that the grant doesn't get lost in

the stacks of paperwork on their desk (everybody has them). Give yourself enough time to make edits once their comments are back.

KEEP A FILE:

Lots of grant applications ask for similar kinds of materials. That narrative you wrote for the last grant might be a great starting point for the next application. By keeping a file of the information, you won't have to reinvent the wheel every time you apply for a new grant.

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...

Would you let your students give up if they didn't get something the first time they tried? Most grants are extremely competitive, so if you don't get the first one, or even the fifth one you apply for, don't give up. Rejection is a fact of life, so put your pride away and try again. Look at each application as an opportunity to improve.

Keys to Success

- Find a good source
- Think Big
- Check the Requirements
- Get organized
- Get Help
- Keep a File
- Be persistent

Ag Mechanics Course Puts Skills to the Test with Service Project

Built demolition derby car for a good cause



William Lehman
*2007 Ideas Unlimited
Winner Region III*

William Lehman, agriculture teacher in Gettysburg, South Dakota, used his ingenuity to create a service learning project that incorporated ag mechanics and was fun for students. Lehman's ag mechanics students created a demolition derby car to help raise money for their local Relay for Life, a fundraising event for the American Cancer Society.

Each year, someone in the community donates a car to the agriculture program. Students completely strip the car and rebuild it from the ground up. They add safety bars, replace the transmis-

sion, rewire the motor, and replace the gas tank and battery box. The skills students use completing this project meet 28 of the standard competencies of South Dakota Agriculture Education.

Once the car has been rebuilt, FFA members sell raffle tickets for the car, which is displayed at both the local car show and the Relay For Life. The winner earns the right to drive the car in the championship heat of the Gettysburg Demolition Derby, and then the FFA chapter salvages what they can from the demolished car for use on the next year's project. All of the proceeds from the raffle are donated to the American Cancer Society.

For submitting his award-winning idea, Lehman received a plaque and a \$400 travel stipend to attend the annual NAAE conference in Las Vegas. Delmar Cengage Learning sponsors the Ideas Unlimited Award. For more information about the Ideas Unlimited award, and all NAAE awards programs, visit our website: www.naae.org.

Teacher Mentor



Bob Brown
*2007 Teacher Mentor
Region I*

Bob Brown is an agriculture instructor at Eastmont Junior High School in East Wenatchee, Washington, who strives to see students excel in school, their FFA projects, and life. He is always willing to help community members, staff, his own students, and those from other chapters. Brown spends a lot of his free time on other people's projects, using his expertise and ingenuity to solve problems.

Beth Hammerberg, mentee and nominator of this award, has been teaching at Wenatchee High School, just across the river from Eastmont, for the past five years. She has been a successful classroom teacher and FFA advisor, thanks in part to the mentorship of Brown, who has helped her in many areas, including managing SAE projects and effectively coaching CDE teams.

"Bob is an endless source of quality information," said Hammerberg. "He is always straight-forward, humble, kind-hearted, and willing to help anyone."

Perhaps one of the most important traits of a mentor to other teachers is approachability, which provides uncertain teachers the confidence to ask for advice.

"As a new teacher in the state of Washington, Bob struck me as being very level-headed and willing to listen to the concerns of young teachers," said Annette Weeks, agriculture instructor at Battle Ground High School. "In a state as large as Washington, I found it very overwhelming to get to know older teachers. Bob has always made me feel very comfortable in his presence."

Each of the 2007 Teacher Mentor winners received a plaque, cash award, and expense paid trip to attend the annual NAAE conference in Las Vegas. CEV Multimedia sponsors the Teacher Mentor award. For more information about this and all other NAAE awards programs, visit our website: www.naae.org.



Outstanding Teacher



*Larry Hendrick
2007 OT Winner
Region IV*

Larry Hendrick, agricultural educator at East Hardin High School in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, has been shaping that school's agriculture program for the last 30 years. After being hired at East Hardin in 1978, Hendrick recognized the need to alter the curriculum in order to meet the needs of his students in a changing agriculture industry. He worked to update the curriculum, and began actively recruiting students into the program.

Although Hendrick's teaching methodology has changed throughout his 30 years of teaching, his underlying philosophy has changed very little.

"When I selected agricultural education as my profession some thirty-four years ago," said Hendrick, "I did so because I wanted to make a positive difference in the lives of those who would be our agricultural leaders in the future."

The foundation of Hendrick's philosophy includes using research-based methods to ensure that students under his guidance are able to reach their full potential. Teaching core concepts and connecting those concepts to FFA activities and SAE projects brings both rigor and relevance to Hendrick's regularly updated curriculum. Nearly twenty classes are offered in the program in each of five major career areas, which are agriscience, production agriculture, agriculture mechanics, horticulture, and agribusiness.

Flexibility is also an important part of this outstanding educator's philosophy. Due in part that agriculture has made many great strides in the areas of science, technology, and globalization, his curriculum content must be regularly adapted to meet industry requirements. Hendrick also continuously modifies his instructional techniques in order to reach his different audiences.

"I am proud to be a teacher of agriculture, but I am very mindful that I am first and foremost an educator of children," said

Hendrick. "When I started teaching I used the question, 'Would I want my son or daughter to have me as their teacher?' as a barometer as to my effectiveness in education. I still use this as my measuring stick today."

As the Region IV Outstanding Teacher, Hendrick received a two-year lease on a Toyota Tundra, and an expense-paid trip to the annual NAAE convention in Las Vegas, where a special dinner and reception were held in his honor. Toyota sponsors the Outstanding Teacher Award as a special project of the FFA Foundation. NAAE is the professional association for agricultural educators. For more information about this and all other NAAE awards programs, visit our website: www.naae.org.



Hendrick accepts his award at the NAAE Convention, December 12, in Las Vegas, from Rich Bame, Toyota National Marketing Manager for Trucks



Get your pins, plaques, certificates and other NAAE merchandise online at

www.naae.org/membership/merchandise

Regional Spotlight

Each month we'll be highlighting one region -- take a minute to learn a little more about Region IV

Region IV



Greg Curlin, Region IV VP
gcurlin@switzerland.k12.in.us

Thoughts and Perspectives from Region IV

As we wonder where the summer has gone, it is time to begin planning for the new school year with curriculum in hand. In the past five years, I have become increasingly aware of the opportunities for us to become involved and create a support system amongst all agricultural educators to help with advocacy, legislation and curriculum development. NAAE is a unique organization, in that its main purpose is to facilitate these opportunities. Because of that focus, NAAE has the ability to help recruit new educators, retain educators, and revive us all throughout the year.

When we consider how to recruit new agricultural educators, we need to think about what exactly it is that attracts people to our profession. Students observe not only how we present our lesson plans, but the way we take part in our school and community. We literally become a model for future educators. Offering students leadership responsibilities

may help them realize that they want to pursue a degree in agricultural education.

If recruitment is important, retention and revival of teachers is critical! Today, we have two new resources to revive us if we can only find the time to sit down at the keyboard. These offer us a chance to learn without traveling a long distance or paying large fees. The first is called Communities of Practice, and it's a sharing and networking site for ag teachers. It's only been open for a few months, and people are already using it to share ideas and help each other solve problems, plus they're posting lessons and labs to share with each other.

The second new opportunity is the NAAE webinar professional development series. These are professional development sessions, similar to those offered at NAAE convention, but online. Participants sign up, and at the right time, they log on to their computers, and dial in to listen to the session. Check out the NAAE website for a listing of upcoming webinars.

Looking into the future of agriculture education, I do see it as a major player at all levels of education. More and more students need practical, hands-on experience. With the greater demand to provide food and fiber in a healthier and safe manner, major companies are seeking students with post-secondary experience in agriculture to meet the demands.

Overall, as I reflect back on my involvement with NAAE at the state and national level, it makes me feel good knowing that we have a major network system that not only works as professionals, but as brothers and sisters who work together in times of need. Regardless if it is recruiting future educators, working with technical and post-secondary educational systems, or sitting down with fellow colleagues to determine future endeavors, we have a network of communications that will assist each of us in continuing to deal with the never-ending changes in our classrooms and our society.



Participants at the Region IV meeting in Bowling Green, KY, take part in professional development activities that were a part of the conference.

Regional Updates

Region I



Hugh Mooney, Region I VP
hmooney@cde.ca.gov

I hope that you are all planning to take some time to reflect on the past year. It is one of the most important things that we can do to improve ourselves as professionals. There is great value to taking the time to look back at our successes and our challenges. Did we use our time to best benefit our students and the programs that serve them? What might we have done differently? Reflection is a valuable practice that many of us seldom devote time to.

I have just returned from attending the Wyoming State Conference. The conference was held in conjunction with Wyoming ACTE. It is difficult to find time to do all the things that you would like when working with other groups. It was a quick trip for me but I enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about the issues that are of importance to members in Wyoming. It is my goal to attend every state's conference during my term. I can see that it will be a challenge.

If you have not yet become a user of the "Communities of Practice," now would be a good time to try it out. As I speak with teachers throughout Region I, I have found that many share the same challenges. Agricultural Educators are often heard saying, "There is no reason to re-invent the wheel." Yet many of us do. Post a question on "Communities of Practice" and you may be surprised how many ideas are shared with you. You will not know until you try.

I do not have all the answers but would be happy to assist you in finding some. Let me know if I can be of assistance.

Region II



Kathy Conerly, Region II VP
kconerly1@bellsouth.net

Some teachers and I were taking a break during our inservice at Leadership Camp this week. I shared that I was writing an article for the News and Views, focusing on mentoring. I asked them to share their thoughts with me. (Their range of teaching experiences ran from 5 to 33 years.) All agreed that it was really important for new teachers to have someone in the beginning of their teaching career, in a similar program, preferably not too far away, with whom they could share ideas and go to for support.

Louisiana, like many states, has always had new teacher workshops, and state personnel who work closely with the new teachers. This year, however, will be different. Our program coordinators, Hals Beard and Bradley Leger, have been working hard to develop a mentoring program for our state, as part of our Team Ag Ed strategic plan. They took a lot of the great ideas from Kansas' mentoring plan and added in our

programs already in place. We're ready to get it going at our LVATA conference in a few weeks.

But I asked the guys, "What about after that? What made you stay in teaching?" Without fail, they all agreed that it was the camaraderie and networking shared, due to their involvement in FFA activities and their professional association. They all talked about others being selfless by teaching them a new contest or sharing teaching tools. Some mentioned being motivated or "recharged" after our teacher inservices and conferences. I mentioned to them the idea of a "15 Year Club," like Arkansas has, or a "women teachers only" group like Texas. One summed it up with, "Hey, whatever works, as long as you have at least one teacher to get together with and you know you can call on if you need it."

So I challenge all states in Region II to begin to develop a comprehensive mentoring plan. We need to mentor those new teachers, share our experiences, and embrace them in our profession. Keep them in by urging them to join our professional associations. Contact the Kansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana state organizations for ideas on how to get started.

Speaking of professional development, I'd like to thank the Arkansas teachers for a great conference in Jonesboro. We appreciated all of your hard work to make it a success. I'd especially like to thank Doug Ward and Nettleton High for hosting us at their school and school farm, Homer Lenderman, Steve Davis, Kyle Sanders, James Potter, Dale Poag, James Cannon, Rodney Wiedower, President, and all the AVATA members that pitched in to cook, serve, help with tours, and make us all feel welcome! Well done!

See you in Charlotte, December 2-6.

Regional Updates

Region VI



Ken Couture, Region VI VP
kcouture@killinglyschools.org

I sincerely hope that you are all getting some much needed rest and family time this summer. I know that for many of us the summer is just as busy as the school year, but at least the bell isn't ringing, signaling the end of one class and the beginning of the next. I also hope most of you took or will take the opportunity to attend your state agricultural education summer conferences or some other professional development activities. We all need to take some time to reflect on the past year and make plans to improve our program.

As a starting point of this reflection, I would encourage you to conduct a program evaluation using the National Quality Program Standards. You can find the evaluation at www.teamaged10x15.org, then click on Strategies & Initiatives. This can be an intimidating exercise, but remember that NO program will score at the highest level in every category. Approach it as a baseline for future improvement and goal setting. Pick one thing you want to work on for the next school year.

This issue focuses on the importance of mentoring. Most of us can point to a former teacher, college professor or acquaintance who inspired us to see things in ourselves that we could not see. These influential people did not call themselves "mentors." The special thing about the term mentor is that we assign that title to that person. They advise us, lead us, cajole us, and make a difference in our lives and careers. I hope we all understand the importance of mentoring to the success of our 10 x 15 goal. Teacher recruitment and retention are critical components to achieving that goal. Many states have initiated formalized mentoring programs for agricultural education, while others have a more informal approach. The key is that we need to help our new teachers (notice I didn't say young teachers) to cope with the challenges of this great profession. It will only stay great if we work toward this in earnest and with a plan.

Finally, we often think of mentoring as I have described it above but I would like you to consider a different point of view. I am privileged to work with three wonderful agricultural education teachers. Our newest addition, Ms. Bethany Royer, joined us two years ago after graduating from the University of Connecticut. We all mentored her through her first year but I soon realized this young lady could serve as a mentor to me. She has certainly been influential because of the innovative ideas and energy she brings to our program. She has initiated several new programs including an elementary level after-school agriculture club taught by her students and a horticulture therapy program for developmentally disabled adults. She has inspired me to reflect on what else I can do and what we can achieve collectively. To me she meets the criteria for a mentor — inspiring and influential. Mentoring is not necessarily a one-way street and it is much more interesting for all involved if we don't look at it that way. Best wishes for a wonderful summer!



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Use Congress' Extended Recess to Build Relationships

More time away from congress means more opportunities to visit with your elected officials while they're at home



*Wm. Jay Jackman, Ph.D., CAE
NAAE Executive Director*

The United States Congress is scheduled to adjourn on August 11 for its traditional August recess. Congress is scheduled to return on September 8. The lengthened recess is due to the conventions of the national parties. Congress is then scheduled to recess again on September 26 to allow plenty of time for campaigning prior to the November elections.

These recesses provide wonderful opportunities for you to meet with your elected officials while they are in their home states and

congressional districts. There will be many local town hall meetings and other

public events in which you, your students, and supporters of your local program can attend and participate.

It seems now that Congress will not convene a "lame duck" session after the election (although this is subject to change by decision of Congressional leadership). This leaves only about four weeks for Congress to complete its work for this year and for this session of Congress. Most education and workforce development legislation has already stalled or been pushed back until 2009, including the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind. Also, the FY 2009 appropriations bills will not be completed, most likely, until a new President is elected.

"These recesses provide wonderful opportunities for you to meet with your elected officials while they are in their home states and congressional districts."

PERKINS APPROPRIATIONS

With FY 2009 budget deficits projected to be at an all-time record high, Congress is struggling with the FY 2009 appropriations process. Democrats blame Republicans for the deficits; Republicans blame Democrats for the deficits; economists blame increased costs of entitlement programs (such as Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security) for the deficits. Blame one or blame all ... the fact remains that appropriations for FY 2009 are going to be tight.

As a new Congress and Administration get ready to take office in January, domestic programs, such as Perkins, will have to fight even harder to receive increased funding. I encourage you to build relationships with your members of Congress and help to ensure that Perkins gets the attention it needs to help students become successful in our competitive global economy.

The NAAE Legislative Action Center is available to assist you in making contact with your elected officials. Please take advantage of this effective tool today to help ensure Perkins funding, and to ensure that your elected officials connect the dots between school-based agricultural education, career and technical education, and Perkins appropriations. The best way for your elected officials in Washington, DC to support agricultural education is for them to support federal funding for Perkins programs.

NAAE provides the Legislative Action Center as a way to make advocacy easier and more effective for our members. Take advantage of this great tool by visiting it at www.naae.org/advocacy/legactioncenter/

News & Views is published bi-monthly by the NAAE, Inc. as a service to its members.

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Mark Your Calendar

October 22-25	FFA National Convention, Indianapolis, IN
December 2-6	NAAE Convention, Charlotte, NC
December 4-6	ACTE Convention, Charlotte, NC

NAAE Welcomes Three Summer Interns



Green



Bergin



Beard

Since 1997, NAAE has been fortunate to have some of the nation's best and brightest serve as interns, and the three students who are currently serving are certainly no exception.

Cindy Green, recent graduate of Virginia Polytechnical Institute, was selected as the 2008 advocacy intern. As an advocacy intern, Green is stationed in Washington, D.C., and has been making weekly visits to Capitol Hill to represent the interests of agricultural educators. During her visits, she discusses agricultural education and its impact with policy makers.

"When I first received an email sent across the Virginia Tech listserv describing the NAAE's summer advocacy internship, I know right off that this was a perfect fit as it combines my two passions: agriculture education and public policy," said Green.

Green graduated this spring from Virginia Tech with a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Sciences. She is currently a graduate student of Geography and Agricultural Education, and plans to teach high school agriculture, as well as become involved in politics or educational policy upon completion of her master's degree.

John Bergin, of Meriden, KS, was selected as one of the two 2008 communications interns. Bergin is a senior in agricultural education at Kansas State University. He will graduate in the spring of 2009 after the completion of his student teaching internship.

"As a future agricultural educator, I have yearned for professional development and networking opportunities as part of my undergraduate experience," said Bergin. "Working with the staff at NAAE presents the best of both worlds in that sense and is a great supplement to my instruction received at Kansas State."

The other communications intern is Danielle Beard, agriculture student at Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, LA.

"I hope that by becoming an agriculture teacher, I can motivate student success the same way my agriculture teacher motivated me," she said. Beard will graduate with her bachelor's degree in March 2009. She then hopes to begin teaching while working on a master's degree in education.

NAAE communications interns write award citations, news releases, presentation scripts and newsletter entries for 2007-08 NAAE award winners.

All three interns will attend the organization's national board meeting this summer, and then the NAAE Convention this December.