2004

Recruitment strategies used by high school agriculture education teachers in West Virginia

Danny R. Dewhurst
West Virginia University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Dewhurst, Danny R., "Recruitment strategies used by high school agriculture education teachers in West Virginia" (2004). *Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Problem Reports*. 2006.
<https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/etd/2006>

This Thesis is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by the The Research Repository @ WVU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Thesis in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you must obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This Thesis has been accepted for inclusion in WVU Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Problem Reports collection by an authorized administrator of The Research Repository @ WVU. For more information, please contact researchrepository@mail.wvu.edu.

Recruitment Strategies Used by High School Agriculture Education
Teachers in West Virginia

Danny R. Dewhurst

Thesis submitted to the
Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Consumer Sciences
at West Virginia University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Science
in
Agricultural Education

Harry N. Boone, Jr., Ph.D., Chair
Stacy A. Gartin, Ph.D.
Deborah A. Boone, Ph.D.

Division of Resource Management

Morgantown, West Virginia
2004

Keywords: Recruitment, High School, Agriculture Education

ABSTRACT

Recruitment Strategies Used by High School Agriculture Education Teachers in West Virginia

Danny R. Dewhurst

Recruitment is the act of enrolling new members as well as keeping current levels of members or students. Questionnaires were sent to all agricultural education teachers in West Virginia to determine what strategies were being used to maintain and increase enrollment in agriculture education programs throughout West Virginia. The first questionnaire was sent to 97 agricultural education teachers asking them to list recruiting activities that they used to promote their programs. A second questionnaire was sent asking them to rate the effectiveness of recruitment activities they have participated in over the past four (4) years. Forty-six secondary agricultural education teachers responded to the survey (45%). Communications between the school administrations and guidance counselors were a concern to the recruiting of agriculture students and scheduling.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this study to my mother, Attarah Faye Dewhurst. She has been instrumental in my work since birth. She has encouraged me to be the best I can be through hard work and perseverance. She has worked hard as a mother rearing her children and is a true role model. Thank you for your support, encouragement, and love.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer expresses his sincere appreciation to Dr. Harry N. Boone, Jr., his graduate advisor and committee chairman, for guidance, encouragement, and advice given during this study. Appreciation is extended to the graduate committee Dr. Stacy A. Gartin, and Dr. Deborah A. Boone for their assistance and suggestions on the manuscript development and other advice. Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Layle D. Lawrence and Dr. Kerry S. Odell, for their assistance in the completion of my Masters Degree.

Special thanks are given to all agricultural education teachers in West Virginia for filling out the questionnaires and sharing their recruiting strategies.

To my wife, Beverly M. Dewhurst, thank you for the encouragement, patience and many other things too numerous to mention that you did while I worked on this study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vi
CHAPTER I: Introduction	1
National FFA Organization.....	6
<i>Supervised Agricultural Experience Programs</i>	7
<i>Statement of the Problem</i>	9
<i>Purpose of the Study</i>	9
<i>Objectives of the Study</i>	10
<i>Limitations of the Study</i>	10
<i>Definition of Terms</i>	10
CHAPTER II: Review of Literature	16
<i>West Virginia Population</i>	16
<i>Public School Enrollment</i>	17
<i>Increased Graduation Requirements</i>	17
<i>World and U. S. Population</i>	18
<i>Need for Agriculture Education</i>	18
<i>Justification of Recruiting Strategies</i>	19
<i>Research on Recruitment Activities</i>	19
<i>Marketing Strategies for Recruiting 4-H Members</i>	21
<i>Recruitment in Agricultural Education</i>	22

<i>Summary of Literature</i>	<i>25</i>
Chapter III: Methodology	26
<i>Purpose of the Study</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Objectives of the Study.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Research Design</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Population.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Instrumentation and Data Collection Procedures.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Analysis of Data.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Use of Findings.....</i>	<i>29</i>
Chapter IV: Findings.....	30
<i>Purpose of the Study</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Specific Objectives</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Reliability.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Phase One</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Phase Two.....</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Summary of Findings</i>	<i>48</i>
Chapter V: Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations	48
<i>Purpose of the Study</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>Specific Objectives.....</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>Summary</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>Conclusions.....</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>Recommendations</i>	<i>54</i>
REFERENCES	56

APPENDICES	58
APPENDIX A: Phase I Cover Letter.....	59
APPENDIX B: Phase I Questionnaire.....	61
APPENDIX C: Phase II Cover Letter.....	63
APPENDIX D: Phase II Questionnaire	65
VITA	68

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Title	Page
1	<i>West Virginia Department of Education 2nd Month Headcount Enrollment History</i>	11
2	<i>Frequency of using Recruitment Strategies during last four years</i>	34
3	<i>Effectiveness of Recruitment Strategies used in Agricultural Education</i>	36

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Public education in West Virginia is in a crisis. While national public elementary and secondary school enrollments are expected to increase, national statistics project that between 1996 and 2008, overall public school enrollment in West Virginia will decline eight percent. High school enrollment in West Virginia is expected to decline 11% over the same period (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2000b). Evidence of this decline is reflected in current West Virginia Department of Education statistics. Since 1994-95, West Virginia's pre-kindergarten through grade 12 student enrollment declined by 14,555 students (4.7%) (White, 2000).

Combine the projected decrease in enrollment with increased academic requirements and the crisis level increases even to get elective courses. Nationally, from 1982 to 1998 the number of required mathematics courses increased from 2.6 to 3.4 and the number of required science courses rose from 2.2 to 3.1. During this same period of time the average number of courses in vocational-technical areas completed by high school graduates dropped gradually from 4.6 units in 1982 to 4.0 in 1998 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2000a).

Reduced enrollment and increased academic requirements have a direct impact on enrollment in vocational-technical programs, such as agriculture education, and the ability to actively recruit students into the programs. In addition to the problems associated with enrollment and academic requirements, West Virginia agriculture education teachers are also faced with a declining production agriculture economy.

The overall agriculture economy in West Virginia has declined significantly over the past twenty-five years. In 1964, the USDA's Census of Agriculture reported West Virginia's

agriculture economy consisted of 5,278,592 acres and 34,504 farms. In 1997, the number of farms in West Virginia had decreased to 17,772 and the number of acres in farmland had declined to 3,455,532 acres (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1999).

In 1964 the market value of agricultural products sold was \$92,234,000 compared to \$447,428,000 in 1997 for West Virginia. The total farm production expenses were not recorded in 1964 but in 1997 it was \$380,631,800, which shows \$66,797,000 in net returns. The income average per farm was \$25,176 in 1997 compared to \$2,673 in 1964 per farm. These figures although much larger than in 1964, do not take into consideration the value of the dollar and inflation. The figure of \$25,176 considered in today's economic income per household would be in the lower percentile (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1999).

The number of farm operators by principal occupation in West Virginia decreased from 7,496 in 1974 to 7,145 in 1997 (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1998). The average age of the farm operator in 1997 was 56.7 years of age compared to 55.0 in 1964 (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1998). If this trend continues, it will mean that less young people in West Virginia are pursuing production agriculture as a career. This trend also follows the West Virginia state population, which has the oldest population in the United States. The overall population percent change in West Virginia between 1990 and 1999 was 0.7% increase compared to 9.6% nationally according to the U.S. Census Bureau (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1998).

The future of agriculture education in West Virginia depends upon the ability of its programs to attract and maintain students. To date little information is known about the type(s) and effectiveness of recruitment activities used to attract students into West Virginia's Agriculture Education programs. Before exploring the future of agriculture education in West Virginia, one should examine its past.

Overview of the Agriculture Education Program

An important part of understanding the traditions and values of any program or organization comes from understanding its history. The beginning of vocational agriculture classes in the high school can be traced to the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Boone, Doerfert, & Elliott, 1987). In 1917, the United States Congress passed the Smith-Hughes National Vocational Education Act that provided federal support for vocational (primarily agriculture) education. The purpose of the act was to train people who have entered or plan to enter upon the work of the farm. It wasn't until 1963 that the focus was expanded to include the agribusiness occupations (Boone, Doerfert, & Elliott, 1987).

In the beginning of the 20th century, the industrial revolution was in its infancy and food and fiber production was important to a growing population. Agricultural production was increasing with inventions such as the reaper and the tractor. These inventions allowed workers to move from rural America to seek jobs in urban environments. It was a time that the American farmer became more productive. This production efficiency has continued from Cyrus P. McCormick's inventions to the present day agriculture technology and scientific breakthroughs.

Today's agriculture education program may be defined as: A structured educational program for students interested in learning more about Agriculture and Natural Resources, which involves middle school and high school students with major emphasis on becoming employed in the agriculture careers or to pursue their further education into a two-year Associate Program, a 4-year College Bachelor Program or some other related gainful employment (Cooper & Burton, 2002).

Students can enroll in agriculture education in the 7th through 12th grades. In addition, many programs offer post-graduate adult and young agriculturists classes. The secondary

agricultural education program includes the classroom, laboratory instruction, leadership development through the FFA, and experiential learning through supervised agriculture experience programs (SAE). Some agricultural education instructors also offer agricultural education programs for the young and adult agriculturists in the community. Local agricultural education programs work closely with the State Department of Education and the State Board of Education and coordinate activities with the state land grant university. Programs also work with other local and state agencies such as the State Department of Agriculture to gain support and serve as a resource for information.

Work in the counties is directed and supervised by the local agricultural education teacher (FFA Advisor), with oversight of the local principal and/or county technical education director. The county superintendent and the board of education provide coordination and final oversight of all educational programs including the agriculture programs. Advice and direction within the local school programs is conducted with the help of the program's advisory committee and local school improvement councils.

Agriculture education programs across the State of West Virginia are different from each other and the rest of the educational programs. Agriculture education programs have changed from the traditional production emphasis to modern high technological programs of the future. At the same time agricultural education teachers still hold true to the traditions and high values of morality and ethics of the past. Change is good and in most cases vital for the growth of any program. Agricultural programs across the state have met the challenges of the 21st century by keeping up to date with the technology of the agriculture industry and offering diverse and rewarding careers for employment for agriculture students such as aquaculture, hydroponics, tissue culture and embryonic studies.

Agricultural education programs in West Virginia must compete for high ability students to maintain a quality program that promotes agricultural education and leadership in the local school system. The agriculture teacher has already worked successfully with low ability students and will continue to do so. “Teachers of vocational agriculture have complained about the quality of students in their vocational agriculture programs. Some have stated that their vocational agriculture program is used as a dumping ground for students who are considered the schools misfits” (Bland, 1985, p. 1). Agriculture programs strive to uphold high standards and expectations and draw from the students’ background and expertise to aid in the classroom instruction. The State Department of Education has outlined a wide variety of curriculum choices the local agricultural education program may offer to benefit the needs of individual students. According to recent information from the West Virginia State Department of Education, there are 80 different agricultural education courses being taught in the state to accommodate the diverse needs of its student populations. These programs are offered in the middle or junior high schools, comprehensive high schools and vocational/technical/centers and prisons. Agriculture across the nation is also very diverse. Teachers have provided a wide variety of courses to help their student population meet expectations and requirements for their major. A major is an area of study that contains a specific curriculum suited for the student’s future goals. These areas include forestry, agriculture mechanics, agriculture business, horticulture, landscaping, small animal care, veterinary technology, meat processing, agriculture production, animal science, plant science, soil science, and computer science.

Technical/career centers/vocational centers have their own special challenge in they have to work with feeder schools to enroll quality agriculture students. Sometimes communication and the competition for enrollment of students is a great challenge thus the term “protectionism.”

Protectionism allows these feeder schools to keep high quality students and send the lower quality students to the career centers or vocational/technical centers.

National FFA Organization

The FFA is a national youth organization that enhances the agricultural education program and allows students to participate in various activities that extend the traditional classroom/laboratory instruction. The FFA is an integral part of the agriculture education program. “The FFA is an essential teaching tool for the practical application of technical skills and lessons in leadership, cooperation, and citizenship, all vital to successful employment in modern agriculture” (National FFA Organization, 1975, p. 6).

“The close correlation between instruction, activity and experience makes the program vocational. The FFA, being an integral part of each of the other program elements, has the unique characteristic of binding them together. It often serves as the catalyst, advancing the student more rapidly toward the intended objective” (National FFA Organization, 1975, p. 7).

Any student that is enrolled in an agriculture education course may join and become an active member. FFA Chapters across the state of West Virginia are assisted by the State FFA Association, which also is connected and strengthened through the guidance of the National FFA Organization. The National FFA organization consists of local FFA chapters across the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam.

Members of local chapters participate in many educational activities from field trips, fairs, contests, curriculum development events, scholastic competitions, community service, etc., as well as class and laboratory exercises. A set of officers is elected annually to provide leadership for the chapter and the FFA Advisor(s) provides supervision for the chapter's operations.

The FFA, being one component of the agriculture education program, stimulates student growth and development. Agriculture education promotes youth development and career development through the use of supervised agriculture experience programs, FFA leadership development opportunities, FFA conventions, county fairs, and festivals, FFA contests and career development events, award programs, as well as classroom laboratory exercises and field trips. The success of each school's agricultural program depends greatly on the quantity and quality of students that enroll in the program. The teacher is the key factor to the program's success.

West Virginia FFA Chapters are grouped in regions, with all local chapters belonging to the State Association. The State Association helps coordinate state level activities. The National FFA Organization also coordinates national leadership training activities, national/regional contests and events as well as International trips overseas.

The FFA is an essential teaching tool for the practical application of technical skills and lessons in leadership, cooperation, and citizenship, which are all vital to successful employment in modern agriculture and agriculture technology of the 21st Century. According to the most recent figures the national membership is 452,885 FFA members across the United States from Alaska to the Virgin Islands. Members belong to one of more than 7,263 chapters, which make up the 54 state associations (each of the 50 states, plus Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands) in the national FFA organizations making it the largest vocational/technical youth organization in the world (National FFA Organization, 2000).

Supervised Agricultural Experience Programs

"The Supervised Agricultural Experience Program" is the individual student application of knowledge and skills acquired through the instructional component put to practical use outside

the classroom under the supervision of the Agriculture Teacher” (National FFA Organization, 1975, p. 7). Through their supervised agricultural experience programs (SAE) students enrolled in agriculture education courses have an opportunity to prepare themselves for a career in agriculture or to pursue further education or advancement that will help them gain employment in this diverse area. The SAE program helps students reach these goals while attending high school or vocational/technical centers. SAE programs were developed to enhance students learning by having hands on experience and by applying what they have learned in the classroom and laboratories. “The student will work closely with his/her vocational agricultural education teacher and his/her parents in developing supervised occupational experience program [sic]” (Carwin, Cross & Groves, 1975, p. XV).

The primary objective of a SOE program is to assist the student in becoming established in his/her chosen occupational field by making it possible for him/her to:

1. Understand requirements for his/her chosen occupation
2. Apply that which he/she has learned
3. Grow into the occupation
4. Further define his/her occupational objective (Carwin, Cross, & Groves, 1975, p. XV)

The agriculture teacher encourages students to keep accurate records of FFA activities, income, expenses, purchases, FFA activities, and other important information about their SAE program. The record book helps the student measure success of their program, determine if the program is making or losing money, and decide where corrections/changes should be made. The supervised agricultural experience program is a vital part of the agriculture education program.

The SAE allows students to become directly involved in agriculture with their own experiential program, which may be producing livestock to raising crops (production program),

working on a farm or in an agricultural business (placement program) or even having their own business (entrepreneurship). The SAE applies the concepts that have been taught in the classroom. This makes the program more complete and meaningful while teaching work values, and record keeping. It also allows students to compete for awards and to advance to the different degrees of memberships in the FFA.

Statement of the Problem

According to a recent study public school enrollment is going to decrease by 10% in West Virginia (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2000b). Given this fact, agricultural education programs across the state will need to use proven “recruitment strategies” to attract and enroll quality students that can benefit from their program of studies. Successful agriculture education programs will rely on proven recruitment strategies to increase awareness of and opportunities for enrollment in the West Virginia agriculture education programs. Efforts must be taken to determine what recruitment strategies have been used in West Virginia to attract quality agricultural education students and how effective each effort has been.

Purpose of the Study

The West Virginia Department of Education second month headcount enrollment history (1985-86 through 1999-2000 school years) shows that state enrollment has declined in many of the states 55 counties with an overall decrease of -2.35% (see Table 1), therefore making a greater challenge for the agricultural education teacher to stabilize and/or increase student enrollment through recruitment strategies. The purpose of this study was to determine the types of recruitment activities utilized by West Virginia agricultural education teachers to attract students into their programs and to establish the teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of each of the recruitment activities.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were reflected in the following:

1. What recruitment activities were being used by West Virginia's agricultural education teachers to recruit students?
2. What were the teachers perceptions of the effectiveness of recruitment activities used to recruit students into their programs?
3. How often were recruitment activities being used to recruit students into their programs?

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to agricultural education teachers employed in West Virginia during the 2000-2001 school term. The effectiveness of the recruitment activities was limited to the teachers' perceptions.

Definitions of Terms

FFA – The National youth organization for students enrolled in agriculture education programs. The organizations objectives and goals are to promote citizenship, leadership, and community service.

Recruitment – The act of enlisting or enrolling students, members into an organization; to increase or maintain the number.

Table 1

West Virginia Department of Education 2nd Month Headcount Enrollment History

County	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92
Barbour	3,544	3,472	3,445	3,335	3314	3,328	3,225	3,151	3,019	2,922	2,915	2,915
Berkeley	9,665	9,587	9,606	9,637	9495	9,544	9,778	9927	10,229	10392	10500	10740
Boone	6,877	6,917	6,932	6,846	6634	6,543	6,521	6315	6,084	5801	5635	5501
Braxton	2,995	2,992	3,029	2,965	2941	2,876	2,887	2872	2,819	2758	2703	2683
Brooke	5,705	5,550	5,364	5,359	5203	5,098	4,952	4865	4,776	4571	4480	4384
Cabell	18,233	17,802	17,719	17,534	16972	16,714	16,340	15983	15,606	15186	14816	14721
Calhoun	1,839	1,824	1,770	1,777	1771	1,759	1,756	1712	1,697	1703	1685	1700
Clay	2,755	2,699	2,660	2,641	2611	2,553	2,589	2506	2,490	2403	2305	2280
Doddridge	1,617	1,575	1,538	1,531	1498	1,500	1,470	1424	1,397	1400	1384	1415
Fayette	12,074	11,906	11,903	11,627	11328	11,038	10,880	10580	10,149	9853	9623	9454
Gilmer	1,583	1,530	1,541	1,511	1401	1,424	1,388	1355	1,324	1249	1268	1341
Grant	2,135	2,104	2,126	2,070	2067	2,051	2,074	2047	1,981	1982	1933	1923
Greenbrier	7,396	7,273	7,189	7,070	6912	6,860	6,716	6625	6,407	6149	6205	6265
Hampshire	3,120	3,118	3,055	3,007	2927	2,906	2,920	2949	3,036	3049	3049	3100
Hancock	7,399	7,247	7,099	6,941	6625	6,434	6,293	6177	5,909	5629	5501	5345
Hardy	2,090	2,011	2,030	2,025	1995	1,914	1,861	1883	1,898	1914	1923	1898
Harrison	14,591	14,238	14,057	13,714	13521	13,430	13,291	13095	12,799	12524	12393	12485
Jackson	5,640	5,500	5,418	5,349	5198	5,180	5,152	5197	5,151	5129	5077	5115
Jefferson	6,239	6,191	6,164	6,146	6054	6,179	6,225	6289	6,270	6269	6336	6404
Kanawha	40,997	40,151	39,612	39,120	38280	38,136	37,399	36674	35,714	35159	34881	34489

Table 1 (Continued)

West Virginia Department of Education 2nd Month Headcount Enrollment History

County	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92
Lewis	3,649	3,601	3,592	3,612	3448	3,466	3,380	3329	3,179	3105	3031	2964
Lincoln	5,477	5,487	5,546	5,476	5309	5,263	5,111	4998	4,915	4848	4702	4622
Logan	11,247	11,328	11,496	11,569	11306	11,173	10,981	10516	10,189	9829	9391	9061
Marion	11,635	11,532	11,266	11,072	10834	10,577	10,303	10014	9,700	9576	9507	9423
Marshall	7,969	7,822	7,654	7,481	7286	7,080	6,865	6866	6,554	6440	6266	6123
Mason	5,418	5,304	5,227	5,205	5193	5,103	5,144	5070	5,033	4983	4873	4789
Mercer	14,314	14,351	14,208	14,076	13788	13,352	13,131	12751	12,260	11841	11516	11209
Mineral	5,734	5,669	5,547	5,354	5306	5,177	5,119	5007	4,930	4851	4785	4799
Mingo	9,159	9,148	9,340	9,294	9061	9,099	8,771	8795	8,516	8330	8029	7636
Monongalia	10,725	10,540	10,500	10,461	10353	10,292	10,353	10295	10,283	10190	10177	10242
Monroe	2,522	2,422	2,414	2,378	2306	2,285	2,256	2250	2,246	2164	2088	2124
Morgan	2,228	2,248	2,197	2,155	2128	2,135	2,114	2141	2,137	2110	2183	2252
McDowell	11,924	11,715	11,599	11,393	11005	10,512	9,912	9243	8,587	8085	7787	7468
Nicholas	6,353	6,257	6,163	6,045	5989	5,815	5,640	5572	5,400	5181	5146	5235
Ohio	8,079	7,813	7,561	7,424	7203	7,020	6,893	6755	6,684	6441	6290	6293
Pendleton	1,543	1,470	1,454	1,453	1444	1,457	1,416	1392	1,375	1375	1384	1408
Pleasants	1,759	1,703	1,661	1,619	1582	1,586	1,566	1540	1,533	1487	1506	1469
Pocahontas	1,890	1,886	1,834	1,818	1810	1,745	1,627	1565	1,539	1520	1534	1533
Preston	6,606	6,552	6,565	6,561	6406	6,360	6,240	6121	6,021	5994	5934	5727
Putnam	8,282	8,332	8,294	8,358	8177	8,202	8,179	8143	8,079	8003	8102	8270

Table 1 (Continued)

West Virginia Department of Education 2nd Month Headcount Enrollment History

County	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92
Raleigh	18,043	17,893	17,850	17,756	17,596	17,250	16,889	16,134	15,775	15,080	14,758	14,472
Randolph	5,831	5,701	5,669	5,584	5,328	5,244	5,211	5,101	5,037	4,927	5,001	4,894
Ritchie	2,186	2,171	2,162	2,116	2,121	2,145	2,065	1,974	1,915	1,921	1,877	1,856
Roane	3,265	3,212	3,234	3,305	3,297	3,279	3,259	3,265	3,176	3,117	3,037	3,039
Summers	2,741	2,697	2,675	2,667	2,643	2,632	2,467	2,436	2,376	2,299	2,225	2,215
Taylor	3,367	3,357	3,329	3,277	3,179	3,134	3,146	3,041	2,840	2,714	2,714	2,756
Tucker	1,789	1,734	1,736	1,651	1,603	1,594	1,527	1,484	1,440	1,428	1,380	1,376
Tyler	2,561	2,546	2,452	2,359	2,281	2,218	2,131	2,089	1,958	1,904	1,861	1,875
Upshur	4,662	4,791	4,847	4,803	4,846	4,856	4,772	4,635	4,513	4,449	4,464	4,419
Wayne	10,234	10,060	10,058	9,911	9,624	9,429	9,375	9,164	8,908	8,603	8,368	8,289
Webster	2,787	2,704	2,727	2,762	2,647	2,630	2,515	2,468	2,402	2,372	2,296	2,215
Wetzel	4,910	4,791	4,742	4,679	4,471	4,319	4,253	4,120	4,014	3,806	3,779	3,815
Wirt	1,211	1,196	1,154	1,157	1,133	1,090	1,115	1,083	1,082	1,084	1,086	1,115
Wood	18,646	18,127	17,758	17,439	17,123	16,837	16,379	16,011	15,736	15,377	15,170	15,100
Wyoming	8,618	8,582	8,735	8,635	8,469	8,324	8,015	7,610	7,255	6,969	6,903	6,573
Total	383,858	378,429	375,503	371,110	363,042	358,147	351,837	344,604	336,342	328,445	323,762	320,814
Pct Change		-1.41%	-0.77%	-1.17%	-2.17%	-1.35%	-1.76%	-2.06%	-2.40%	-2.35%	-1.43%	-0.91%

SAEP – Supervised agriculture experience programs.

FFA Chapter – The local organization that includes its FFA members, advisors, and its officers, that works with the State and National FFA Youth Organization.

Agricultural Education Program – A plan or system under which action may be taken toward a goal that combines agriculture education classes, FFA, and supervised agriculture experience program (SAEP) to serve agriculture students.

FFA Advisor – The agricultural education teacher that serves to advise the chapter's FFA officers and its members in a direction for growth and development of leadership and goals.

Agricultural Education Teacher – One whose occupation is to instruct students in agriculture toward graduation from high school and seek gainful employment or further education.

Protectionism – The process of certain people or groups of people that continue to keep or disallow others to join by keeping them away from certain areas, organizations, or groups for their own gain or insurance.

Comprehensive High School – High schools that cover all courses covering completely or broadly, inclusive, insurance, having or exhibiting wide mental groups (knowledge).

Vocational Centers – A specific building or structure that houses many specialized areas of vocational or career training and may also be called “Technical” or “Career Center”.

Vocational – Relating to or being in training in a skill or trade to be pursued as a career.

Career– A field for or pursuit of consecutive progressive achievement in public, professional or business life; a profession for which one trains and which is undertaken as a permanent calling.

Record Book – Agriculture education students use this record keeping device to accurately keep expense, income, purchases, inventory, business agreements, and FFA activities annually, which allows them to evaluate their SAE each year. This is a book of reference for managing their agriculture programs.

CDE – Career development events are educational activities used to enhance students' interest in agriculture and FFA by providing contests and other events for student growth.

ATVS – Area technical and vocational schools

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Agricultural education teachers face many challenges in the 21st century. All teachers, including agricultural education, must maintain adequate numbers and of students to justify their programs and continue to be successful at the same time. Due to the pressures of maintaining adequate enrollments, agricultural education teachers must be proactive in the process of influencing student enrollment. Most of West Virginia schools are experiencing declining enrollment as the states' overall population declines. The pressures created by a declining state population and declining student numbers have been further exacerbated by increases in graduation requirements mandated by Senate Bill 300. Teachers are accountable for student achievement under this law. Increasing career and technology options, home schooling, and student vouchers or guarantees allow students to take different non-traditional pathways versus the traditional pathways. Traditional pathways were courses such as home economics, business, vocational agriculture and drafting. These pathways were for students that were not going to college. Students were guided toward college curriculum or a vocation.

West Virginia Population

West Virginia is losing its future work force. During the past decade the number of West Virginians under age 34 decreased by 9.19 %. Those 35 and older increased by 17 %, except for the 60-74 age group, which also decreased (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000). There is a declining tax base in West Virginia because of fewer workers which means the state will have trouble maintaining a viable school system and providing health care to a population that is growing older. The state has been experiencing more deaths than births over the past three years. (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000) The largest decrease in any age group was among children age 10-14

(13.82%). This group represented 15 % of the population, which amounts to 270,466 West Virginians (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000). States that continue to have the highest per capita income and strongest growth are those whose populations are the most educated according to Professor Julian Fox (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000). A declining population combined with a declining tax base threatens the state's education system.

Public School Enrollment

The student population in West Virginia varies from county to county. Overall the states public school enrollment documented a decline from 306,451 in 1995-1996 to 285,169 in 2000-2001. According to the West Virginia Department of Education first month headcount, student enrollment decreased by 21,282 students from 1995 through 2001. Projections from 2002-2010 are not encouraging either. Enrollment projections in public elementary and secondary schools in West Virginia grades K-12, show a decline from 285,000 in 2002 to 269,000 in 2010 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000b).

According to the West Virginia second month enrollment figures, a decline occurred in all but eight counties from the 1998-1999 school year to the 1999-2000 school year. Overall there was a decrease from 296,559 to 290,944, which amounts to 5,615 students or 1.89% (WV Department of Education, 2000).

Increased Graduation Requirements

Public school students across West Virginia must make career choices and develop a five- year educational plan at a very early age. Senate Bill 300 requires all students, with the help of their parents, guidance counselors, and teachers to create a five-year educational/career plan while in the 7th or 8th grades. Students select courses to meet graduation requirements and elective courses that meet the framework guidelines of the major selected for their five-year plan.

In addition, most school systems have increased their graduation requirements to 32 credits and encourage students to take higher math, science and foreign language classes.

World and U.S. Population

“The world population was projected to reach 6.1 billion people by the year 2001.” (U. S. Census Bureau, 1990) “The world population is projected to increase to 8 billion people by the year 2024” (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000). If this projection is correct, the world population will have increased 25% from the year 2000. The increase in the world’s population demonstrates the need to provide education in agriculture for students interested in finding employment in the growing agriculture industry.

Need for Agriculture Education

Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States of America, has been an avid supporter of the National FFA Organization. President Carter stated that the “First step toward peace is eradicating hunger” (Future Harvest, 2000, pg. 2). Having been a former FFA member and chapter FFA officer, President Carter expressed a need for agricultural education, he noted: “The FFA organization encourages youth enrolled in agricultural education to get involved in their communities, state, national and international affairs; promoting leadership, agriculture production, environment and human progress and peace” (Future Harvest, 2000, p. 2).

Francine Cousteau, the President of the Cousteau Society in the United States and in France since 1997, continues the work of Jacques-Yves Cousteau to protect the “water planet” for present and future generations. She stated “Better agriculture-one solution to the population puzzle” (Future Harvest, 2000. p. 2).

Justification for Recruiting Strategies

Agriculture education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources that will spread and diversify the United States. Regardless of the business or industry, executives agree that motivated, adaptable, informed and articulate individuals are their most valuable resources. Through agricultural education and the FFA, young people have found they can help themselves and their future by participating in the leadership, personal growth and career development activities.

Research on Recruitment Activities

Why recruit? Recruit is to fill up the numbers with new members; to increase or maintain the number; to enroll or seek to enroll (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1973). Career and technical education has suffered enrollment problems because there are fewer students in West Virginia today than in the 1990's. Other factors that have hurt career and technical education enrollments include recent efforts to increase the number of academic credits required for graduation and negative attitudes toward career and technical education on the part of school personnel. Sixty-five percent of state supervisors and 88% of secondary teachers agreed that many students are unable to enroll in agricultural education because of high school graduation requirements (Connors, 1998). As a result, career and technical educators must reassess their existing marketing and recruitment strategies (Naylor, 1987).

Besides the problems of declining enrollments and increasing credit requirements, a combination of other forces is placing additional strains on the ability of career and technical education to attract students. A study of administrators and counselors from area vocational-technical schools throughout Pennsylvania, indicated that the following are the major school "protectionism" problems resulting in declining enrollment. Sending school counselors, negative

reactions to and lack of knowledge about vocational education by sending school personnel have hurt enrollment. Sending school personnel's practice of discouraging "better" students from attending technical or vocational schools is a problem enrolling and maintaining students in agriculture programs. The inability to reach all potential students and parents creates another obstacle in recruiting agriculture students (O'Neill, 1985). Even though some vocational educators are not implementing an aggressive marketing strategy, many are adopting methods of marketing their program.

The Pennsylvania and Florida career and technical programs examined by O'Neill (1985) and Waltz and Beeman (1985) suggested the improvement of recruitment strategies by improving the product being marketed. After examining recruitment strategies found to be successful in these programs, the authors suggested personal developing recruitment programs should consider the following principles of sound marketing, while not forgetting vocational education's fundamental responsibility to its student: Sound marketing should include research the market, be visible, be thorough, be aggressive, meet the competition head on and practice the fundamentals of good marketing (Naylor, 1977).

Not only are agriculture educators facing challenges to recruit and retain high quality secondary students, they find other obstacles make it difficult to maintain quality agriculture education programs. Within the last decade, secondary agricultural education programs have experienced significant changes. A large number of programs have moved away from a production agriculture focus to emphasize agricultural science, biotechnology, sales or marketing (Connors, 1998). In an article on managing change in agricultural education, Herring (1995), stated "In a dynamic, ever changing world, I believe that perhaps the greatest challenge we face in agricultural education is that of anticipations and managing change" (p. 38).

One of the most critical issues identified by Connors (1998), was the recruiting and retention of high school agricultural education students. College students can also be used to recruit students into the high school or career and technical secondary programs across West Virginia.

Recruiting has been a major concern for agricultural education teachers and teacher educators for many years. In previous years declining enrollment in secondary agricultural education programs and decreases in FFA membership have been a great concern to individuals in agricultural education (Hoover & Scanlon, 1991).

Many factors contribute to declining enrollment: Agriculture's negative image, an anti-vocational bias and increased academic requirements for high school graduates (Hoover & Scanlon, 1991). Some of the negative images that agriculture receives have come from the media, TV, movies, shows, and commercials. Many secondary students perceive agriculture careers as primarily manual labor type jobs. Another challenge is that agricultural education is not a compulsory course but instead it is an elective in which students may or may not take. Many students enroll in agriculture education courses because of FFA activities. Some students like the contests, field trips and other activities similar to those in 4-H the other agricultural youth organizations.

Marketing Strategies for Recruiting 4-H Members

Recruitment in 4-H as well as the FFA youth organization is beneficial to the agriculture education programs within our public schools. Many students are involved in both the 4-H and the FFA in their particular schools and the successful agricultural education teachers should encourage students to get involved.

A study was conducted to help 4-H programs in West Virginia understand how they could recruit and retain 4-H members because 4-H is a voluntary youth organization. They found that 4-H club leaders who have exciting and active clubs, who rely on 4-H members telling their friends about 4-H, and who make meetings and programs interesting and fun will continue to recruit new members into their local 4-H programs (Wingenbach, Meighan, Lawrence, Gartin & Woloshuk, 1997).

Nestor in 1997 studied marketing strategies influenced youth to join 4-H in West Virginia. The research concluded that marketing methods such as electronic media and word-of-mouth were the most influential factors in recruiting 4-H members indicates that a new marketing strategy is needed in West Virginia. Traditional marketing methods promoting 4-H is no longer appealing to West Virginia youth.

Recruitment in Agricultural Education

One of the major concerns that face agricultural education teachers in West Virginia, besides low enrollment, is the quality of the students taking courses in agriculture. Why are students taking the agriculture classes and how can the agriculture education teacher attract or enroll more qualified students in the agriculture courses? In 1985, Bland completed a study to determine recruitment practices and criteria for selection of first year agriculture education students as perceived by agriculture education teachers, guidance counselors, and state supervisors of agriculture. He concluded that students were primarily responsible for determining whether or not to enroll in a first-year vocational agriculture class and the major practice for recruitment of agriculture education students was recruitment programs presented at middle schools. The study also found that the major recruitment practices as perceived by guidance counselors and agriculture education teachers included recruitment programs at middle

schools. It becomes very important for the agricultural education teacher to recruit potential students at an early age including students from the middle school. Career fairs, FFA officer visitations, classes being taught in the middle school or other methods has positive results for agriculture programs enrolling students in high school. The results from a study conducted in 1991 by Hoover and Scanlon found the appearance of a negative perception among secondary students concerning employment opportunities in agriculture and related vocational areas.

Rossetti (1988) found the major enrollment barriers in career and technical programs conflicted with the acquisition of a college degree. In her study a series of 64 recruitment practices were evaluated. Teachers reported that the FFA organization activities and recruitment at the 8th grade level had the greatest impact on recruiting for their programs. They also reported that the media, which included using local newspapers, radio and television, were the least effective and least frequently used recruitment activity.

The potential agriculture student may have an opportunity to learn more at the eight-grade level or middle school level. There are advantages and disadvantages of offering courses at the middle school level. In a 1997 study of junior high/middle school agricultural education programs in Nebraska (Fritz & Moody, 1997) found a tremendous growth in the number of junior high/middle school agricultural education programs in Nebraska. Nebraska instructors saw the primary opportunity associated with offering agricultural education at the junior high/middle school level as creating agriculture awareness.

Besides having some type of agriculture education programs at the junior or middle school levels, it is very important to inform the counselors of the changes and current curriculum being taught at the high school level. Agriculture is constantly changing and is the most dynamic and diverse industry in the United States. The agriculture education teacher must keep

current of these changes and may need to make changes in the methods and classes being taught from traditional to non-traditional classes. Making efforts to incorporate middle or junior high courses when needed to help maintain and expand the current programs may be necessary for growth and success.

One of the many suggestions that have been offered to help with recruitment of quality agriculture students is the public relations and the communication that is positive toward administrators and especially guidance counselors. Camp (1980) stated that it was important to get the counselor involved in agriculture activities. Many times the guidance counselor may be asked to serve as judge of the FFA contests or maybe to serve as a chaperone on some of the FFA field trips. Developing positive communication, developing an aggressive and positive in-school public relations program and involving the counselor in activities and utilizing the counselor in student follow-ups are all important recruitment strategies.

The National FFA Organization has developed many types of recruiting programs for America's youth. Young people across the United States want to belong and contribute to society and they do it in many ways. The *Chapter Resource Guide* (National FFA Organization, 2001) has many suggestions that may fit into the chapter program of activities. The three aims and purposes of the FFA are: 1) to develop leadership, 2) to develop citizenship, and 3) to develop cooperation (National FFA Organization, 2000). These are still important in the foundation of agricultural lives. Project Pals is another important part of the FFA recruiting strategies which starts at an early age with elementary students. Other recruiting ideas that change or help elementary students develop their own opinion about agriculture are being developed and designed so that the young people formulate their own opinions. Agricultural education students, which are also FFA members, possess attitudes and exhibit behaviors

indicating the benefit more from their personal academic and career experiences during school than the general student population (Horatio Alger Association, 1999). FFA members like to be active and involved in their communities and teaching their younger counterparts at the elementary levels.

In a 2000 study, Balschweid and Talbert found 1) FFA members are more enthusiastic about and attach greater value to their school studies than the average student; 2) FFA members are more likely than the average student to relate personal effort to success and believe it is important to do their best; and 3) FFA members are preparing for post secondary studies in slightly high numbers and have more sharply defined career objectives than the average student. These are but a few of the findings that denote how FFA members prepare themselves for the future.

Summary of Literature

Recruiting strategies among high school agricultural education teachers range from very little organized strategies to moderately organized strategies. Most of the recruiting of students has come from the ordinary activities that a program usually performs during the course of the year. Many activities that the agriculture program's participates in are good recruiting activities, but recruiting youth are not their primary goal. Is change necessary? Agriculture education programs that continue to be successful will develop recruiting strategies that are committed to its students and its program. According to *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, "Change is to make a difference in some particular order" (1973, p 186).

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Purpose of the Study

The West Virginia Department of Education second month headcount enrollment history (1985-86 through 1999-2000 school years) shows that the state enrollment has declined in many of the states 55 counties with an overall decrease of -2.35% (see Table 1), therefore making a greater challenge for the agricultural education teacher to stabilize and/or increase student enrollment through recruitment strategies. The purpose of this study was to determine the types of recruitment activities utilized by West Virginia agricultural education teachers to attract students into their programs and to establish the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of each of the recruitment activities.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were reflected in the following:

1. What recruitment activities were being used by West Virginia's agricultural education teachers to recruit students?
2. What were the teacher's perceptions of the effectiveness of recruiting activities used to recruit students into their programs?
3. How often were recruitment activities being used to recruit students into their programs?

Research Design

A descriptive method of survey research was used in this study. A descriptive research design is appropriate when the primary purpose is to explore or describe the present status, the study is conducted in a natural setting, the researcher is interested in making generalizations

about populations, and/or specific objectives are stated as questions to be answered (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 2002). Because the study was limited to determining the recruiting practices used among agricultural education teachers in West Virginia to recruit students, the frequency each activity was being used, and the teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness, Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh's (2002) recommendation was used.

Population

The target population of this study was 97 agricultural education teachers who were employed in West Virginia during the 2000-2001 school year. A list of agricultural education teachers were secured from the records held within the Davis College's agricultural education department. Since this study was a census the frame for this study were the same individuals as the population in which all units were included.

Instrumentation and Data Collection Procedures

Specific data collected for this study was obtained through a survey, which consisted of two mail questionnaires. A questionnaire is a research technique used to gather large amounts of information in a short period of time to enhance a study. A modified Delphi technique was used to collect the data using two separate surveys mailed to all agricultural education teachers and programs in West Virginia. In Phase I, a cover letter (see Appendix A) was used to explain the purpose of the study and give precise instructions for completing and returning the questionnaires. The letter was signed by the researcher and an university faculty member. A self-addressed stamped envelope was provided to each teacher to help speed up the return of the questionnaires. The Phase I questionnaire consisted of an open-ended questionnaire that asked agricultural education teachers to list the top three recruitment strategies used in their agricultural education programs. (see Appendix B)

Phase I data were recorded, summarized, and 24 strategies used to recruit agricultural education students were identified. A second cover letter (see Appendix D) was used during Phase II to explain the purpose of the study and give precise instructions for completing and returning the Phase II questionnaire. The letter was signed by the researcher and appropriate university faculty member. A self-addressed stamped envelope was provided to each teacher to help speed up the return of the questionnaires. The phase II questionnaire (see Appendix E) asked all agricultural education teachers in West Virginia to identify the number of times during the past four years the teacher and the department used each of the twenty-four recruitment strategies identified during the Phase I. Using a Likert scale, teachers were also asked to rate the effectiveness of each activity on its ability to attract students into the agricultural education program. The Likert scale utilized the following: 1-Not Effective; 2-Somewhat Effective; 3-Effective; and 4-Very Effective.

Phase I and II questionnaires were examined for content and face validity by faculty members at West Virginia University. The questionnaires were reviewed by West Virginia University Agricultural Education faculty, and they provided feedback as to the content and face validity of the instruments. According to Borg and Gall (1989) "content validity is the degree to which the sample of the text items represent the content that the test was designed to measure" (p. 250).

A Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was calculated using data from Phase II of the study. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was .97. "Reliability" (1) is the quality or state of being reliable, (2) the extent to which an experiment, test, or measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials. (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1973, p. 976) Data

obtained were analyzed at West Virginia University using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences for Windows (SPSS).

Analysis of Data

Returned questionnaires were visually verified and entered in an Excel spreadsheet. The data were transferred to the personal computer version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Data analyses procedures included frequencies and means to describe the population

Use of Findings

Findings from this study will be used by the West Virginia University agriculture education teachers to enhance the development of statewide recruitment programs and to increase enrollment in agricultural education programs throughout the state. The findings will also help local school administrations and agricultural education teachers to develop their own recruiting strategies.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the types of recruitment activities utilized by West Virginia agricultural education teachers and to establish their perceptions of the effectiveness of each of the recruitment activities.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine what activities were being used by West Virginia's agricultural education teachers to recruit students.
2. Determine teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of recruitment activities used to recruit students into their programs.
3. Determine the frequency recruitment activities were being used.

Reliability

The student was limited to the information that was received from the agriculture teacher population in West Virginia. Ninety-seven teachers were sent surveys and questionnaires asking them to identify various recruiting activities used which was Phase I of the study. The second phase of the study was a questionnaire that was developed from Phase I asking agriculture teachers to rate the effectiveness and the number of times the recruiting activity was used over the last four (4) years.

Forty-six secondary agriculture teachers (45%) responded to this study. The age of the agriculture teacher was not taken into consideration nor was the years of experience.

The demographics of the area in which the agriculture teachers were employed were not considered as well. The regions of the state, employment, location, age, years of experience and types of programs were not considered. The number of times the respondents used the activity also may be considered as a factor in the study.

Phase One

A modified Delphi research design was utilized for this research study. During phase one of the study, agricultural education teachers employed in West Virginia during the 2000-2001 school year were asked to “list the three (3) most successful recruitment strategies you (your department) have used to recruit students into your high school Agriculture Science program.” Twenty-four recruitment activities were identified during this phase of the research process. They were used to create the instrument used in phase two of the study. The list of 24 recruitment activities included:

1. Eighth grade tours,
2. Department open houses,
3. FFA officers visit elementary schools,
4. Teaching agriculture classes in middle school,
5. Talking to potential agriculture students at fairs and festivals,
6. Educational exhibits, booths, demonstrations, at fairs, etc.,
7. Information mailed to potential agriculture science students,
8. Student visitation to potential agriculture science students,
9. Word of mouth; students telling other potential students,
10. Public relations: newspapers, TV, radio, posters, etc.,
11. Articulation with other schools (middle school & high school),

12. Agriculture field days,
13. Fun activities for FFA/potential FFA members,
14. Develop a positive relationship guidance counselors,
15. Use former students to recruit prospective students,
16. Community service projects,
17. Provide exciting, challenging curriculum,
18. Dinners, picnics, and FFA banquet,
19. Send interest survey to 8th grade students,
20. Telephone calls to potential members,
21. Teacher show he/she is caring,
22. Alumni adult farmers provide information to prospective members/students,
23. Inform faculty, administration, and
24. Agriculture science teachers assist 4-H members with projects.

Phase Two

The questionnaire for phase two of the study was again sent to all agricultural education teachers employed in West Virginia during the 2000-2001 school year. Respondents were asked to list the number of times each of the 24 recruitment activities were used in the past 4 years and using a 4 point Likert scale, rate the level of effectiveness of each activities. Using the number of times the activity was used during the past four years, the number of teachers using each activity was calculated.

Eighth Grade Tours. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they had used eighth grade tours in the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Thirty-nine teachers (88.6%) reported using eighth grade and other tours as a method

of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and 20 times over the past four years for an average use of 3.88 times. Over 97% of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Fourteen respondents (38.9%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” 14 respondents (38.9%) rated the activity “effective,” and seven respondents (19.4%) rated it “very effective.” Only one respondent (2.8%) indicated the activity was “not effective.”

Open House. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they had used open houses in the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Thirty teachers (68.2%) reported using an open house as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and eight times over the past four years for an average use of 3.08 times. Over 76% of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Fourteen respondents (46.7%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” seven respondents (23.3%) rated the activity “effective,” and two respondents (6.7%) rated it “very effective.” Seven respondents (23.3%) indicated the activity was “not effective.”

FFA Officers Visit Elementary Schools. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they had used their FFA officers to visit elementary schools in the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Thirty-six teachers (81.8%) reported using their FFA officers to visit elementary schools as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and

Table 2

Frequency of using Recruitment Strategies during last four years

	Strategy Used		Times Used Past 4 Years	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Word of mouth; students telling other potential students	44	100.0	8.4	12.12
Teacher showing he/she is caring	44	100.0	5.0	3.58
Inform faculty, administration	44	100.0	7.8	15.48
Provide exciting, challenging curriculum	43	97.7	4.2	1.18
Guidance counselor positive relationship	42	95.5	4.4	3.42
Dinners, picnics, and FFA banquet food	42	95.5	4.6	1.92
Former students recruiting prospective students	40	90.9	4.5	2.28
Community service projects	40	90.9	5.0	5.39
Talking to potential agriculture students at fairs and festivals	39	88.6	4.6	3.42
Eighth grade tour	39	88.6	3.9	3.32
Public relations: newspapers, TV, radio, posters, etc.	38	86.4	7.6	14.02
Fun activities for FFA/potential FFA members	37	84.1	6.4	5.56
FFA officers visit elementary schools	36	81.8	2.8	1.44
Agriculture science teachers assisting 4-H members with projects	35	79.5	4.2	3.39
Student visitation to potential agriculture science students	34	77.3	5.0	5.26

Table 2 (Continued)

Frequency of using Recruitment Strategies during last four years

	Strategy Used		Times Used Past 4 Years	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Educational exhibits, booths, demonstrations, at fairs, etc.	32	72.7	3.4	1.53
Articulation with other schools (middle school & high school)	32	72.7	4.1	2.41
Information from alumni adult farmers to prospective members/students	31	70.5	4.1	2.02
Open house	30	68.2	3.1	1.98
Interest surveys to 8th grade students	29	65.9	2.5	1.42
Agriculture field day	29	65.9	3.5	1.93
Phone calls to potential members	24	54.5	3.7	1.72
Teaching agriculture classes in middle school	23	52.3	2.6	1.45
Information mailed to potential agriculture science students	23	52.3	2.8	1.25

seven times over the past four years for an average use of 2.84 times. Over 91% of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Nine respondents (25.0%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” 12 respondents (33.3%) rated the activity “effective,” and 12 respondents (33.3%) rated it “very effective.” Three respondents (8.3%) indicated the activity was “not effective.”

Table 3

Effectiveness of Recruitment Strategies used in Agriculture Education

	Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Effective		Very Effective		<i>M</i>
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	
Public relations: newspapers, TV, radio, posters, etc.	1	2.7	14	37.8	14	37.8	8	21.6	3.5
Community service projects	3	8.1	13	35.1	17	45.9	4	10.8	3.3
Inform faculty, administration	4	10.3	15	38.5	14	35.9	6	15.4	3.2
Talking to potential agriculture students at fairs and festivals	0	0.0	13	34.2	14	36.8	11	28.9	3.1
Word of mouth; students telling other potential students	0	0.0	4	9.1	15	34.1	25	56.8	3.1
Dinners, picnics, and FFA banquet	1	2.4	7	16.7	24	57.1	10	23.8	3.1
Guidance counselor positive relationship	7	17.5	9	22.5	16	40.0	8	20.0	3.0
Interest surveys to 8th grade students	5	18.5	12	44.4	8	29.6	2	7.4	3.0
Teaching agriculture classes in middle school	3	12.0	2	8.0	10	40.0	10	40.0	2.9
Educational exhibits, booths, demonstrations, at fairs, etc.	5	15.6	14	43.8	8	25.0	5	15.6	2.9
Open house	7	23.3	14	46.7	7	23.3	2	6.7	2.8
Articulation with other schools (middle school & high school)	6	20.0	8	26.7	12	40.0	4	13.3	2.8
Fun activities for FFA/potential FFA members	2	5.7	5	14.3	19	54.3	9	25.7	2.7
Former students recruiting prospective students	0	0.0	5	12.5	20	50.0	15	37.5	2.6

Table 3 (Continued)

Effectiveness of Recruitment Strategies used in Agricultural Education

	Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Effective		Very Effective		<i>M</i>
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	
Provide exciting, challenging curriculum	0	0.0	7	17.1	21	51.2	13	31.7	2.6
Information from alumni adult farmers to prospective members students	4	14.3	13	46.4	9	32.1	2	7.1	2.6
Student visitation to potential agriculture science students	0	0.0	9	28.1	11	34.4	12	37.5	2.5
Agriculture field day	3	11.5	8	30.8	9	34.6	6	23.1	2.5
Information mailed to potential agriculture science students	4	16.7	8	33.3	7	29.2	5	20.8	2.4
Phone calls to potential members	4	19.0	10	47.6	4	19.0	3	14.3	2.3
Teacher showing he/she is caring	1	2.4	6	14.3	20	47.6	15	35.7	2.3
Agriculture science teachers assisting 4-H members with projects	1	2.9	9	26.5	13	38.2	11	32.4	2.3
FFA officers visit elementary schools	3	8.3	9	25.0	12	33.3	12	33.3	2.1

Teaching Agriculture Classes in Middle Schools. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they had used teaching agriculture classes in middle schools in the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Twenty-three teachers (52.3%) reported using teaching agriculture classes in middle schools as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between 1 and 4

times over the past four years for an average use of 2.62 times. Eight-eight percent of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Two respondents (8.0%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” 10 respondents (40.0%) rated the activity “effective,” and 10 respondents (40.0%) rated it “very effective.” Three respondents (12.0%) indicated the activity was “not effective.”

Talked to Potential Agriculture Students at Fairs and Festivals. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they had talked to potential agriculture students at fairs and festivals to attract students into the agriculture program during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Thirty-nine teachers (88.6%) reported they had talked to potential agriculture students at fairs and festivals as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and 20 times over the past four years for an average use of 4.58 times. All of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Thirteen respondents (34.2%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” 14 respondents (43.8%) rated the activity “effective,” and 11 respondents (28.9%) rated it “very effective.”

Educational Exhibits, Booths, Demonstrations, at Fairs, Etc. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they had used educational exhibits, booths, and/or demonstrations at fairs and festivals to attract students into the agriculture program during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Thirty-two teachers (72.7%) reported they had educational exhibits, booths, and/or demonstrations at fairs and festivals as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and eight times over the past four years for an average use of 3.44 times. Over 84% of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of

effectiveness. Fourteen respondents (43.8%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” eight respondents (25.0%) rated the activity “effective,” and five respondents (15.6%) rated it “very effective.” Five respondents (15.6%) indicated the activity was “not effective.”

Information Mailed to Potential Agriculture Science Students. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they had mailed information to potential agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Twenty-three teachers (52.3%) reported they had mailed information to potential agriculture science students as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and four times over the past four years for an average use of 2.79 times. Over 83% of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Eight respondents (33.3%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” seven respondents (29.2%) rated the activity “effective,” and five respondents (20.8%) rated it “very effective.” Four respondents (16.7%) rated the activity as “not effective.”

Student Visitation to Potential Agriculture Science Students. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they had visited potential agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Thirty-four teachers (77.3%) reported they had visited potential agriculture science students as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and 20 times over the past four years for an average use of 4.96 times. All of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Nine respondents (28.1%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” 11 respondents (34.4%) rated the activity “effective,” and 12 respondents (37.5%) rated it “very effective.”

Word of Mouth; Students Telling Other Potential Students. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they had used word of mouth to recruit potential agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Forty-four teachers (100.0%) reported they had used word of mouth as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and 50 times over the past four years for an average use of 8.37 times. All of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Four respondents (9.1%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” 15 respondents (34.1%) rated the activity “effective,” and 25 respondents (56.8%) rated it “very effective.”

Public Relations: Newspapers, TV, Radio, Posters, Etc. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they had used public relations media (newspapers, TV, radio, posters, etc.) to recruit potential agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Thirty-eight teachers (86.4%) reported they had used public relations media as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and 80 times over the past four years for an average use of 7.58 times. Over 97% of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Fourteen respondents (37.8%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” 14 respondents (37.8%) rated the activity “effective,” and eight respondents (21.6%) rated it “very effective.” Only one respondent (2.7%) rated the activity as “not effective”.

Articulation with Other Schools (Middle School & High School). The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they took steps to articulate their activities with other schools to recruit potential agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Thirty-two teachers (72.7%) reported they took

steps to articulate their activities with other schools as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and ten times over the past four years for an average use of 4.10 times. Eighty percent of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Eight respondents (26.7%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” 12 respondents (40.0%) rated the activity “effective,” and four respondents (13.3%) rated it “very effective.” Six respondents (20%) indicated the activity was “not effective.”

Agriculture Field Days. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they conducted and/or participated in agriculture field days to recruit potential agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Twenty-nine teachers (65.9%) reported they conducted and/or participated in agriculture field days as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and ten times over the past four years for an average use of 3.50 times. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Eight respondents (30.8%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” nine respondents (34.6%) rated the activity “effective,” and six respondents (23.1%) rated it “very effective.” Only three respondents (11.5%) indicated the activity was “not effective.”

Fun Activities for FFA/Potential FFA Members. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they used fun activities for FFA members and potential members to recruit potential agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Thirty-seven teachers (84.1%) reported they used fun activities for FFA members and potential members as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and 20 times over the past

four years for an average use of 6.41 times. Over 94% of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Five respondents (14.3%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” 19 respondents (54.3%) rated the activity “effective,” and nine respondents (25.7%) rated it “very effective.” Only two respondents (5.7%) indicated the activity was not effective.”

Develop a Positive Relationship with Guidance Counselors. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they had taken steps to develop a positive relationship with local guidance counselors to recruit potential agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Forty-two teachers (95.5%) reported they taken steps to develop a positive relationship with local guidance counselors as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and 20 times over the past four years for an average use of 4.38 times. Over 82% percent of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Nine respondents (22.5%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” sixteen respondents (40.0%) rated the activity “effective,” and eight respondents (20.0%) rated it “very effective.” Seven respondents (17.5%) indicated the activity was “not effective.”

Use Former Students to Recruit Prospective Students. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they used former students to recruit potential agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Forty teachers (90.9%) reported they used former students as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and ten times over the past four years for an average use of 4.48 times. All of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Five respondents (12.5%) rated the activity

“somewhat effective,” 20 respondents (50.0%) rated the activity “effective,” and 15 respondents (37.5%) rated it “very effective.”

Community Service Projects. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they used community service projects to recruit potential agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Forty teachers (90.9%) reported they used community service projects as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and 25 times over the past four years for an average use of 5.03 times. Over 91% of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Thirteen respondents (35.1%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” 17 respondents (45.9%) rated the activity “effective,” and four respondents (10.8%) rated it “very effective.” Only three respondents (8.1%) indicated that this activity was “not effective.”

Provide Exciting, Challenging Curriculum. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they promoted their exciting and challenging curriculum to recruit potential agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Forty-three teachers (97.7%) reported they promoted their exciting and challenging curriculum as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between two and ten times over the past four years for an average use of 4.19 times. All of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Seven respondents (17.1%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” 21 respondents (51.2%) rated the activity “effective,” and thirteen respondents (31.7%) rated it “very effective.”

Dinners, Picnics, and FFA Banquet. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they used dinners, picnics, and banquets to recruit potential agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Forty-two teachers (95.5%) reported they used dinners, picnics, and banquets as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and eight times over the past four years for an average use of 3.67 times. Over 97% of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Seven respondents (16.7%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” 24 respondents (57.1%) rated the activity “effective,” and ten respondents (23.8%) rated it “very effective.” Only one respondent (2.4%) indicated the activity was “not effective.”

Send Interest Survey to 8th Grade Students. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they sent an interest survey to 8th grade students to recruit potential agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Twenty-nine teachers (65.9%) reported they sent an interest survey to 8th grade students as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and four times over the past four years for an average use of 2.50 times. Over 80% of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Twelve respondents (44.4%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” eight respondents (29.6%) rated the activity “effective,” and two respondents (7.4%) rated it “very effective.” Five respondents (18.5%) indicated the activity was “not effective.”

Telephone Calls to Potential Members. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they telephoned potential members to recruit them as agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been.

Twenty-four teachers (54.5%) reported they telephoned potential members as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and eight times over the past four years for an average use of 3.67 times. Eighty-one percent (81%) of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Ten respondents (47.6%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” four respondents (19.0%) rated the activity “effective,” and three respondents (14.3%) rated it “very effective.” Four respondents (19%) indicated the activity was “not effective.”

Teacher Show He/She is Caring. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they demonstrated their caring nature as a method to recruit potential agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Forty-four teachers (100.0%) reported they demonstrated their caring nature as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and 20 times over the past four years for an average use of 4.96 times. Over 97% of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Six respondents (14.3%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” 20 respondents (47.6%) rated the activity “effective,” and 15 respondents (35.7%) rated it “very effective.” Only one respondent (2.4%) indicated the activity was “not effective.”

Alumni Adult Farmers Provide Information to Prospective Members/Students. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they used alumni adult farmers to recruit potential agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Thirty-one teachers (70.5%) reported they used alumni adult farmers as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and ten times over the past four years for an average use of

4.08 times. Over 85% of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Thirteen respondents (46.4%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” nine respondents (32.1%) rated the activity “effective,” and two respondents (7.1%) rated it “very effective.” Four respondents (14.3%) indicated the activity was “not effective.”

Inform Faculty, Administration. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they kept faculty and administrators informed of program activities to recruit potential agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Forty-four teachers (100.0%) reported they kept faculty and administrators informed of program activities as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and 80 times over the past four years for an average use of 7.76 times. Nearly 90% of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Fifteen respondents (38.5%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” 14 respondents (35.9%) rated the activity “effective,” and six respondents (15.4%) rated it “very effective.” Four respondents (10.3%) indicated the activity was “not effective.”

Agriculture Science Teachers Assist 4-H Members with Projects. The respondents were asked to identify the number of times they assisted 4-H members with projects as a method to recruit potential agriculture science students during the past four years and rate how effective the recruitment activities have been. Thirty-five teachers (79.5%) reported they assisted 4-H members with projects as a method of recruiting students into the program. The respondents estimated using the recruitment activity between one and 18 times over the past four years for an average use of 4.23 times. Over 97% of the respondents indicated the activity had some level of effectiveness. Nine respondents (26.5%) rated the activity “somewhat effective,” 13 respondents

(38.2%) rated the activity “effective,” and 11 respondents (32.4%) rated it “very effective.” Only one respondent (2.9%) indicated the activity was “not effective.”

Summary of Findings

The recruiting activity that generated the most responses was word of mouth, students telling other students, with 44 (100%) of the teachers responding. The teachers also estimated that they used this method 8.4 times over the past four (4) years. Twenty-five of the teachers (57%) responded that it was also very effective as a recruitment method.

Forty-two teachers (96%) used dinners, picnics, and FFA banquets/other ceremonies as a recruiting activity to enroll students into the program. Twenty-four (57%) responded that it was effective and ten (23.8%) indicated it was very effective.

Forty-two teachers (96%) used the concept that he or she was a caring individual as a recruiting activity. Twenty teachers (47.6%) reporting that it was an effective recruitment method and 15 (35.7%) reporting that it was very effective.

Forty-one teachers (93%) felt an exciting and challenging curriculum was a good recruitment tool. Twenty-one teachers (51.2%) reported that it was effective and 13 (31.7%) reported that it was very effective.

The recruiting activities used the least by teachers were phone calls to potential members. Twenty-one teachers (48%) responded that they use this as a recruiting activity. Four teachers (19%) responded that it was very effective.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the types of recruitment activities utilized by West Virginia agricultural education teachers and to establish their perceptions of the effectiveness of each of the recruitment activities.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine what activities were being used by West Virginia's agricultural education teachers to recruit students.
2. Determine teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of recruitment activities used to recruit students into their programs.
3. Determine the frequency recruitment activities were being used.

Summary

High school agricultural education teachers in West Virginia used a variety of techniques to recruit students into their programs. High school agricultural education teachers identified 24 activities that were used to recruit students. These activities included conducted eighth grade tours; held department open houses; FFA officer visited elementary schools; taught agriculture classes in middle school; talked to potential agriculture students at fairs and festivals; developed educational exhibits, booths, demonstrations, at fairs, etc.; mailed information to potential agriculture science students; visited potential agriculture science students; used word of mouth - students telling other potential students; maintained good public relations: newspapers, TV, radio, posters, etc.; articulated with other schools (middle school & high school); organized

agriculture field days; provided fun activities for FFA/potential FFA members; developed a positive relationship guidance counselors; used former students to recruit prospective students; conducted community service projects; provided exciting, challenging curriculum; invited prospective members to dinners, picnics, and FFA banquets; sent interest survey to 8th grade students; made telephone calls to potential members; teacher showed he/she was caring; alumni adult farmers provided information to prospective members/students; kept faculty and administration informed; and agriculture science teachers assisted 4-H members with projects.

Agricultural education teachers' use of the recruitment activities ranged from an average of once every two years (2.5 times in 4 years) to more than twice per year (8.4 times in 4 years). The ten most frequently used activities included; used word of mouth - students telling other potential students (8.4 times in 4 years); kept faculty and administration informed (7.8 times in 4 years); maintained good public relations: newspapers, TV, radio, posters, etc. (7.6 times in 4 years); provided fun activities for FFA/potential FFA members (6.4 times in 4 years); teacher showed he/she was caring (5.0 times in 4 years); conducted community service projects (5.0 times in 4 years); visited potential agriculture science students (5.0 times in 4 years); invited prospective members to dinners, picnics, and FFA banquets (4.6 times in 4 years); talked to potential agriculture students at fairs and festivals (4.6 times in 4 years); and used former students to recruit prospective students (4.5 times in 4 years).

Teachers were asked to rate the effectiveness of the recruitment activities using a four point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not Effective) to 4 (Very Effective). The effectiveness of the 24 recruitment activities ranged from "somewhat effective" to "effective." The ten most effective recruitment activities included: maintained good public relations: newspapers, TV, radio, posters, etc. (3.5); conducted community service projects (3.3); kept faculty and

administration informed (3.2); talked to potential agriculture students at fairs and festivals (3.1); used word of mouth - students telling other potential students (3.1); invited prospective members to dinners, picnics, and FFA banquets (3.1); developed a positive relationship guidance counselors (3.0); sent interest survey to 8th grade students (3.0); taught agriculture classes in middle school (2.9); and developed educational exhibits, booths, demonstrations, at fairs, etc. (2.9).

The use of recruitment activities throughout the school and summer months is critical to any successful program. Time, the number of agriculture teachers, the number of agriculture students, the community, the administration, communications and attitude (personality) of the agriculture teacher are critical factors. The recruitment process is never ending and more recruitment activities may be used that were not identified to enhance the recruitment process.

Tours to the agriculture program from elementary and Middle/Jr. high school have been widely used successfully as a recruiting strategy so potential students may see the educational facilities, equipment and also talk to students presently enrolled in the agriculture science program.

Open house activities have been used for many years and some school systems require this as a method to discuss student's grades and other information with parents and guardians. FFA award and recognition ceremonies have often been conducted during this recruiting activity to assure attendance. Other activities such as door prizes, dinners, games, etc. may be used successfully with this recruiting activity. FFA officer visits to other schools can be conducted using visual aids, livestock animals, pets, and other interesting agriculture items. This strategy has been used to make more contacts to a captive audience and to expose the FFA officers to groups as a leadership training activity as well. Many agriculture science programs reported

teaching a term or a nine-week course in the seventh and eighth grade to introduce younger students to agriculture and FFA. Fairs and festivals provide a great opportunity for agriculture science teachers to work with younger students. Helping these students will allow one-on-one conversations about the students' likes, dislikes, and other topics that may encourage these students to take agriculture science courses. Constructing an educational booth or having demonstrations at local or state fairs is another opportunity for potential students to see that agriculture students and teachers are very active. These activities are another way to reach all potential students. Information mailed to potential agriculture science students is an activity used to contact a large number of students to determine if they would be interested in the agriculture science program. Parents and guardians may also have the opportunity to read about the agriculture program information. Student visitation to potential agriculture science students is another method of talking to students one-on-one in their environment. It allows the agriculture science teacher to visit potential students' home and meet their parents or guardians. Word-of-mouth allows current agriculture science students the opportunity to tell potential students throughout the year about the exciting curriculum, the teacher, as well as the FFA chapter activities. Using the media effectively may be a positive activity to display agriculture science students in action in a positive light to a broad based audience. Student of the month and SAE programs of the month etc. may be used as well as other media announcements. Working with other schools or other departments within the same school opens up communication and reduces misconceptions. It allows for better recruiting opportunities for all involved. Many students develop an idea about certain jobs and careers at an early age. Conducting a field day or a career fair for younger students exposes them to hands on activities and permits them to talk to individuals representing different careers. Activities that allow students to socialize in a positive

atmosphere will also enhance the agriculture program. Guidance counselors that schedule students' classes need to understand the agriculture program. A positive relationship with the guidance counselor will have a great impact on student enrollment.

An active agriculture program provides many opportunities for its members. Former students that benefited from the agriculture program will have a positive influence on recruiting students into the program. Community service projects allow potential students to see that the agriculture program is helping the community in which they live. Agriculture programs should provide students with an exciting, diverse and challenging curriculum to sustain interest in the minds of young students. Students do not want to be bored. They need food for thought. The agriculture program has many tools to attract potential students into the program. One such tool is the FFA and its activities. FFA banquets and ceremonies allow FFA members, parents/guardians, and other guests to display their many talents. Surveys are a way to gather information for potential students interested in the agriculture program. Surveys reach many students across the community that may not be accessible to other recruiting activities. Phone calls are a method to contact potential agriculture students and allow the student to have a one-on-one conversation with the teacher. The students may ask questions about the program. A positive teacher that shows he/she is caring can be a positive method of attracting and maintaining students in the agriculture program. Alumni and adult farmers will communicate with other parents, guardians of potential students and may influence them to enroll in the agriculture program. Administration and faculty is a great tool to use to help students to become more exposed to the agriculture program. The administration has the final decision on allowing students to participate in classroom and FFA activities. Local 4-H club members will remember the agriculture science teacher helping them with their projects. 4-H members may want to

know more about the FFA and about agriculture when the agriculture science teacher makes a home visit.

These recruiting activities, which were recognized by the teachers in West Virginia, will enhance the agriculture programs across the state. New or beginning agriculture teachers for the first three (3) years may take a more direct approach to help them identify and enroll potential agriculture students by using techniques such as media, open house, 4-H members, surveys, middle schools, guidance counselors, teachers, adults, to name a few.

The veteran or established agriculture teacher may want to focus more on recruiting activities that may boost interest and excitement back into a stagnant or declining program by looking at changing the curriculum into a more modern, exciting and challenging program, having more fun activities; like wild game lunches or sporting activities. The program may want to work with other successful programs in the state as well as advertising the positives of the program, by having student, SAE, and FFA member of the month. Recruiting programs may be changed or other activities added when needed.

Conclusions

Based on information gathered from this study, the following conclusions were reached:

1. High school agriculture education teachers in West Virginia used a variety of techniques to recruit students into their programs. High school agriculture teachers identified twenty-four (24) different techniques they currently use to recruit students.
2. Personal contacts with potential agriculture students were more successful than non-personal contacts. Agriculture teachers reported word-of-mouth, visitations, other personal contacts at fairs and festivals, and many other personal contacts were successful recruiting activities.

3. A pro-active agriculture education program that has a variety of recruiting activities throughout the year may be successful with potential agriculture students. Teachers need to be caring and show that they are concerned for the potential agriculture student by helping them with 4-H projects or other concerns that they may have.
4. Another important observation from this study was the agriculture science teachers worked with staff, faculty, guidance counselors and other school employees. The agriculture teacher showed that he or she is an important part of the community and worked well with the administration.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered as a follow-up to the study.

1. Teachers need to take a more pro-active role in recruitment and selection of students.
2. Agricultural education teachers should use a wide variety of recruitment activities to encourage perspective students to enroll in agriculture education programs.
3. Agriculture science teachers should show potential agriculture students that they care about them and their future.
4. Additional research about the length of the employment term or extended employment needs to be evaluated as it related to the recruitment of potential agriculture students.
5. Established teachers and/or programs may want to emphasize curriculum changes and other unique activities to enhance current student enrollment as well as recruiting new students. Student of the month recognition is also suggested as a recruiting activity for these programs.
6. Beginning teachers and/or programs need to use a variety of recruiting activities. These young programs or beginning teachers need to be visible throughout their community.

These programs need to use the media, open house, school counselors, the 4-H extension agents to identify potential agriculture students.

7. Agriculture teachers need to allow students to play an active role and take responsibility for agriculture student enrollment.
8. It is also recommended that the use of the local School Improvement Council, along with the agriculture program advisory committee be used extensively with the recruitment of agriculture students.
9. Additional research into the types of facilities or institutions; vocational/technical centers, special programs, may also need conducted.

REFERENCES

- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., & Razavieh, A. (2002). *Introduction to research in education* (6th ed.) California: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Balschweid, M. A., & Talbert, B. A. (2000). *A comparison of Agricultural education students to the "typical student."* West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University.
- Bland, S. F. (1985). *Recruitment practices and criteria for selection of first year vocational agriculture students as perceived by vocational agriculture teachers, guidance counselors, and state supervisors of vocational agriculture.* Unpublished master's thesis, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV.
- Boone, H. N., Doerfert, D. L., & Elliot, J. F. (1987, Winter). Supervised occupational experience programs: History, philosophy, current status, and future implications. *Journal of the Association of Teacher Educators in Agriculture*, 28(4), 57-64.
- Borg, W. R. & Gall, M. D. (1989). *Educational research: An introduction.* New York: Longman.
- Camp, C. (1980). *School dropouts: A discussion paper.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED191959).
- Carwin, M. A., Cross, I. C., & Groves, R. (1972). *Supervised occupational experience manual for students of vocational agriculture.* Danville, IL: Interstate Printers and Publishers.
- Connors, J. J. (1998). A Regional delphi study of the perceptions of NVATA, NASAE, and AAAE members on critical issues facing secondary agricultural education programs. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 39(1), 37-47.
- Cooper, E. L., & Burton, L. D. (2002). *Agriscience: Fundamentals of applications.* Albany, NY: Delmar Thomson Learning.
- Doese, E. K., Miller, W. W. (1988). *Factors affecting the future enrollment of students in vocational agriculture.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED300559).
- Fritz, S., & Moody, L. (1997). Assessment of junior high/middle school agricultural education programs in Nebraska. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 38(1), 61-65.
- Future Harvest. (2000). *World leaders and public figures.*
- Hoover, T. S., & Scanlon, D. C. (1991). Recruitment practices – A national survey of agricultural educators. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 32(3), 29-34.
- Horatio Alger Association. (1999). *The State of Our Nation's Youth.* Alexandria, Virginia: Author.
- National Center for Educational Statistics (2000, January). *Digest of educational statistics, 1999.* Washington, D.C.: Author.
- National Center for Educational Statistics (2000, January). *Projections of education statistics to 2010.* Washington, D.C.: Author.

- National FFA Organization. (1975). *FFA Advisors Handbook*. Indianapolis, Indiana
- National FFA Organization. (2000). *The official FFA manual*. Indianapolis, Indiana.
- National FFA Organization. (2001). *FFA chapter resource guide*. Indianapolis, Indiana
- National FFA Organization. (2004). *Chapter Resource Guide, 2004-2005*. Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Naylor, M. (1987). *Effective and ethical recruitment of vocational education students*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED282092).
- Nestor, C. D. (1997). *Marketing strategies for recruiting 4-H members in West Virginia*. Unpublished master's thesis, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV.
- O' Neill, E. J. (1985). *Study of student recruitment and selection for area vocational technical schools in Pennsylvania and selected vocational educators' opinions concerning the process*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pennsylvania State University.
- Rossetti, R. (1989). *Factors that influence a student not to enter into a high school vocational curriculum*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED301697).
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). *United States Census Report*. Washington, D.C.: Author
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (1998). *Agriculture fact book 98*. Washington, D.C.: Author
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (1999 March). *1997 Census of agriculture: West Virginia state and county data*. Washington, D.C.: Author.
- Waltz, F. C., & Beeman, C. E. (1984). *A compendium of research addressing barriers to student recruitment and retention in vocational education in Florida. Final report from September 1, 1984 to December 31, 1984*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED262167).
- Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*. (2002). G.&C. Merriam Company, Springfield, Massachusetts, USA.
- White, D.A. (2000). *West Virginia report cards: Trend data 1994-1995 through 1998-1999*. Charleston, WV: West Virginia Department of Education
- Wingenbach, G. J. Meighan, T., Lawrence, L. D., Gartin, S. A., Woloshuk, J. M. (1999). Associated factors in recruitment and retention of 4-H members in West Virginia. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 40(1), 23-29.
- WV Department of Education. (2000). *West Virginia County Boards of Education comparison of second month enrollments - (Enrollment History 2000*. Charleston, WV: Author.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Phase I Cover Letter

September 18, 2000

Dear Agriculture Science Teachers:

Student recruitment is vital to the success of high school Agriculture Science programs. To date little effort has been made to identify recruitment strategies used by high school Agriculture Science teachers or evaluate their success.

I am conducting a self-funded thesis study to identify effective recruitment strategies used by high school Agriculture Science teachers in West Virginia. I am writing to ask you to participate in this exciting study that will complete my Masters Degree Program at West Virginia University in Agricultural and Environmental Education.

Please complete the enclosed short questionnaire by listing the top three recruitment strategies that you have used in your agriculture program. It will take less than five minutes to complete the questionnaire and you will be making a valuable contribution to agriculture science programs in West Virginia and across the nation. The knowledge and information that you have acquired is valuable to you and your program. I would like to be able to share this information with others across the state so they can use it to help strengthen their programs. I greatly appreciate your time and effort and I am anxious to hear from you.

Please complete the enclosed short questionnaire and return it to me by October 5, 2000. I have enclosed a stamped self-addressed envelope for your convenience.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Sincerely,

Danny Dewhurst
Agriculture Science Teacher
Mason County Voc-Tech Center

Harry N. Boone, Jr.
Assistant Professor
Agricultural and Environmental Education

APPENDIX B

Phase I Questionnaire

RECRUITING STRATEGIES USED BY HIGH SCHOOL
AGRICULTURE SCIENCE EDUCATION TEACHERS IN WEST VIRGINIA

Name: _____

School: _____

Please list the three (3) most successful recruitment strategies you (your department) have used to recruit students into your high school Agriculture Science program

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Thank you! **PLEASE RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE BEFORE OCTOBER 5, 2000.**

APPENDIX C

Phase II Cover Letter

Dear Agriculture Science Teachers:

I would like to thank the teachers that took time out of their busy schedule to participate in Phase I of this research effort and to share valuable information about recruitment strategies they have used to attract students into their programs. I sincerely appreciate you taking time and sharing your recruitment strategies with me.

Twenty-four different recruitment activities were identified by the teachers who returned the Phase I questionnaire. To complete Phase II of my study, I not only need the participation of the teachers who responded during Phase I, but the participation of all agriculture education teachers in the State. Your responses will benefit new teachers as well as veteran teachers across the state.

I am asking that each teacher complete the enclosed questionnaire. You will be asked to identify the number of times you/your department used each of the twenty-four strategies during the past four (4) years. In addition, you will be asked to use the following scale to rate the effectiveness of each activity on its ability to attract students into your agriculture program.

1-Not Effective	3-Effective
2-Somewhat Effective	4-Very Effective

It is always good to hear what others across our state are doing and to see that our profession is so involved with our students as well as our communities. I would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. **Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me by ????.** I have enclosed a stamped self-addressed envelope for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Danny Dewhurst
Agriculture Science Teacher
Mason County Voc-Tech Center

Harry N. Boone, Jr.
Assistant Professor
Agricultural and Environmental Education

Enclosure

APPENDIX D

Phase II Questionnaire

Recruitment Activities Used by West Virginia Agriculture Science Teachers

The following questionnaire contains twenty-four recruitment activities identified during Phase I of this research effort. Please identify (in column 2) the **number of times** you/your department used each strategy in the past four (4) years. In addition, please use the following scale to rate the effectiveness of each activity to attract students into your agriculture program. **Circle** the number in columns 4, 5, 6, or 7 that corresponds to your assessment of the activity's effectiveness.

1-Not Effective
2-Somewhat Effective

3-Effective
4-Very Effective

	Number of times activity was used in the last 4 years	<u>Level of Effectiveness</u>			
		Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Effective	Very Effective
Eight grade tour		1	2	3	4
Open house		1	2	3	4
FFA officers visit elementary schools		1	2	3	4
Teaching agriculture classes in middle school		1	2	3	4
Talking to potential agriculture students at fairs and festivals		1	2	3	4
Educational exhibits, booths, demonstrations, at fairs, etc.		1	2	3	4
Information mailed to potential agriculture science students		1	2	3	4
Student visitation to potential agriculture science students		1	2	3	4
Word of mouth; students telling other potential students		1	2	3	4
Public relations: newspapers, TV, radio, posters, etc.		1	2	3	4
Articulation with other schools (middle school & high school)		1	2	3	4
Agriculture field day		1	2	3	4
Fun activities for FFA/potential FFA members		1	2	3	4
Guidance counselor positive relationship		1	2	3	4

	Number of times activity was used in the last 4 years	Level of Effectiveness			
		Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Effective	Very Effective
Former students recruiting perspective students		1	2	3	4
Community service projects		1	2	3	4
Provide exciting, challenging curriculum		1	2	3	4
Dinners, picnics, and FFA banquet/=food		1	2	3	4
Interest surveys to 8th grade students		1	2	3	4
Phone calls to potential members		1	2	3	4
Teacher showing he/she is caring		1	2	3	4
Inform faculty, administration		1	2	3	4
Information from alumni adult farmers to perspective members/students		1	2	3	4
Agriculture science teachers assisting 4-H members with projects		1	2	3	4

VITA

DANNY R. DEWHURST

dannydewhurst@yahoo.com
708 Boso Avenue
Ravenswood, WV 26164
(304) 273-5241

Education: **DAVIS COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND
CONSUMER SCIENCES AT WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY,**
Morgantown, WV 26505
Pursuing a *Master of Science* in Agriculture Education. Expected date of
graduation August 16, 2004.
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY,
Blacksburg, VA 24061
Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture Education. Minor in Animal
Science. Degree Conferred 1978.
POTOMAC STATE COLLEGE OF WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY,
Keyser, WV 26726
Associate of Science Degree. Degree Conferred 1976.
WAHAMA HIGH SCHOOL
Mason, WV 25260
High School Diploma 1974.

**Professional
Experience:** 2001-2004, *Agriculture Science Teacher*, **Mason County Board of
Education**, Hannan High School, Ashton Upland Road, Ashton, WV
25503-9714. **Responsibilities included:** FFA Advisor, responsible for
eighty-one (81) FFA members and agriculture mechanics lab.
1981-2001, *Agriculture Science Teacher*, **Mason County Vocational Center**,
Ohio River Road, Point Pleasant, WV 25503. **Responsibilities Included:**
Agriculture greenhouse program (three (3) greenhouses) Received two (2)
WV Department of Natural Resource "Project Owls" grants to construct
and maintain an outdoor learning site, classroom, and nature trail." Also in
1987 Best Vocational Program in West Virginia.
1979-1981, *Agriculture Science Teacher*, **Lincoln County Vocational
Center**, Hamlin, WV. **Responsibilities Included:** Initiated a new
agriculture science program, greenhouse, Ag. Mechanics Lab and school
farm.
1978-1979, *Agriculture Science Teacher*, **Nottoway Senior High School**,
Nottoway, VA . **Responsibilities included:** FFA Advisor and Agriculture
Production teacher responsible for 150 FFA members and Ag. Mechanics
Lab.
1995-1997, *Coach*, **Ripley Middle School**, Ripley, WV, Coaching 7th Grade
Boys Basketball

1997-1998, *Coach, Point Pleasant High School*, Point Pleasant, WV,
Coaching 9th Grade Boys Basketball
1998-2002, *Coach, Point Pleasant High School*, Point Pleasant, WV,
Coaching Jr. Varsity Boys Basketball
1997-1998, *Assistant Coach, Point Pleasant High School*, West Virginia
State AAA Softball Champions
1997-2001, *Coach, Point Pleasant High School*, Coaching Girls Jr. Varsity
Softball
2001-2004, *Coach, Point Pleasant High School*, Coaching Girls Varsity
Softball

Work Experience:

1981, *State Training Program, USDA (FSA)* Morgantown, WV 26505.
Responsibilities included: Worked directly with the WV Farm Service
State Director to help county directors and farmers with USDA
government programs
1976-1978, *Work study student, Virginia Tech*, Blacksburg, VA 24061.
Responsibilities included: Work-study with the animal science program
on genetics and breed performance data and research
1974-1976, *Work study student, Potomac State College*, Keyser, WV
26726. **Responsibilities included:** Farm assistant, Potomac State Dairy
Farms, milking, feeding and caring for dairy herd
1974, *Office worker, Coffey Construction Company, Inc.*, New Haven, WV
25265. **Responsibilities included:** Clerical work, payroll, taking phone
calls, ordering supplies, etc.
1970-1974, *Farm hand, Van Laurel Farms*, Rt. 1, Box 153, New Haven, WV
25265 **Responsibilities included:** All farm related work.

Honors and Activities:

Honorary WV State FFA Degree, 1997
West Virginia Agriculture Teachers Association Legislative Award, 1998-
1999
West Virginia Conservation Farmer Award, 1995
Mason County Education Association President's Plaque, 1991

Invited Honorary:

- Alpha Tau Alpha, Virginia Tech, 1977
- Alpha Tau Alpha – National Conclave 1977

Organizations:

- WVACTE, 1981-2004
- West Virginia Education Association, Mason County Education
Association, 1981-2004
- Agriculture Education Society – *Vice President*, 1977-1978
- Block and Bridle, 1976-1978
- Virginia Tech Dairy Club, 1977-1978
- Virginia Tech Collegiate FFA – *Secretary*, 1977-1978