Public Perception of the St. Edward Vocational Agriculture Program

Steven Lynn Oberg

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PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE
ST. EDWARD VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

by

Steven Lynn Oberg

A THESIS

Presented To The Faculty of
The Graduate College in the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science

Major: Agricultural Education

Under the Supervision of Dr. Richard M. Foster

Lincoln, Nebraska
May, 1988
Purpose. The purposes of this study were: (1) determine importance of major program areas of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program by respondent group; (2) determine the importance of major components of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program by respondent group; (3) determine the most important vocational agriculture instructional areas which need to be taught in St. Edward by respondent group; (4) determine the extent to which residents are knowledgeable about FFA activities within the vocational agriculture program in St. Edward by respondent group; (5) determine how parents, business managers and taxpayers perceive the importance of SOE and summer employment activities in the St. Edward vocational agriculture program; and (6) determine if the present vocational agriculture program is perceived as a necessary program in the St. Edward school system.

Method. The parents, business managers and taxpayers were surveyed directly through the use of a questionnaire, giving them an opportunity to express their feelings regarding the vocational agriculture program. The questionnaire was designed as a
mail-survey type of instrument. After being reviewed by the administration and board of St. Edward Public School, data were collected from 50 percent of the business managers, 50 percent of the parents, and 20 percent of the taxpayers.

Findings. Based on the responses from parents, taxpayers and business managers, the researcher concluded:

1. The major purpose of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program is to provide a general knowledge of agriculture.

2. The major component of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program is to be providing classroom instruction.

3. The major instructional area of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program was observed to be agronomy.

4. Leadership development and record keeping were identified as important areas of concern in the SOE and FFA areas.

5. All respondent groups felt that the St. Edward vocational agriculture program was a necessary part of the St. Edward high school curriculum.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to express his sincere appreciation to Dr. Richard M. Foster, Professor of the Department of Agricultural Education, University of Nebraska, for his assistance which he so willingly gave during the writing of the thesis. Appreciation is also given to Dr. Roy Dillon, Professor of the Department of Agricultural Education, University of Nebraska and Dr. Tom Silletto, Professor of the Department of Agricultural Engineering, University of Nebraska, for getting this study started.

Appreciation is also expressed to the respondents of the St. Edward School District who completed the questionnaires and sent them back to me.

I would like to express gratitude to my parents, Robert and Gloria Oberg for their encouragement, support and assistance.

I would also like to express gratitude to my lovely wife, Sue for her understanding, encouragement, love and support on this project.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Community</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of Study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Study</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Agricultural Instructor</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Program</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. DESIGN OF STUDY</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose and Objectives</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample and Population</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of Sample</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of Instrument</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection of Data</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Data</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Findings</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B: COVER LETTER</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX C: REMINDER LETTER</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX D: CODE SHEET</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Percentage of sample respondents per group for the study .................... 21

Table 2. Response rate per respondent group ..... 22

Table 3. Mean, standard deviation and F-values of the importance of major program areas for inclusion in the St. Edward vocational agriculture program............ 27

Table 4. Means, standard deviation and F-values of the importance of selected components of the total program by respondent group ... 29

Table 5. Means, standard deviation and F-values of the importance of instructional areas of the vocational agriculture program by respondent group ..................... 31

Table 6. Means, standard deviation and F-values of the importance of selected FFA activities by respondent group......................... 33

Table 7. Means, standard deviation and F-values of the importance of selected areas of SOE by respondent groups......................... 34

Table 8. Means, standard deviation and F-values of the importance of vocational agriculture instructor's summer employment activities by respondent groups ..................... 36

Table 9. Means, standard deviation and F-values of respondents toward the importance of the vocational agriculture program in the St. Edward high school curriculum ............ 38

Table 10. Means, standard deviation and F-values of the necessity of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program in the high school curriculum by age of respondent .......... 40
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

If your vocational agriculture program were to be evaluated by the residents of your community, businesses and the parents of your students, what kind of rating would it receive? Cullen and Lawrence (1978) point out:

These are people who shape attitudes of students, pay taxes which make vocational agriculture possible, and influence members of boards of education with regard to moral and financial support and even continuance or discontinuance of programs.

Teachers, students, advisory committee members, school authorities and others must be concerned about and build a strong program and project a positive image of vocational agriculture in their community. Departmental progress, enrollment, activities and support are all affected by how others see us (Clouse, 1983).

Vocational agriculture programs need to be "tailor made" to fit the local situation of the individual community in which they are centered. We need to know what vocational agriculture graduates are doing after graduation, what careers are available for them and for which careers we should provide training (Schuh, 1986). The vocational agriculture program must have undated information and material to use. The instructor must be up-to-date, professional, and willing to work hard
(Howard, 1983). The total vocational agriculture program must be a quality program and exceed the minimum standards. Without this, the image of the program will merely be whitewashed (Lee, 1982).

DESCRIPTION OF THE ST. EDWARD COMMUNITY

St. Edward is located in Boone County, about 35 miles west of Columbus, Nebraska. The town has a population of 890 persons and has a trading area of approximately 10 radius miles. There are four churches in the community, a swimming pool, park, and many small businesses, such as a grocery store, two elevators, a lumberyard, two gas stations, a bank, and many others. St. Edward provides workers for industries in Columbus, Lindsay, and Albion, Nebraska. The main industries around St. Edward are agriculturally related.

The land around St. Edward consists of gently rolling hills except along the Beaver River where the land is flat and is excellent farm ground. Most of the land is used for row crops such as corn, soybeans or milo. Alfalfa, wheat, oats and pasture are grown along with some natural range forage. Most of the land can be irrigated, usually by center pivot or flood irrigation.

The St. Edward Public School is a class D school. There are approximately 80 students enrolled in grades 9-12. The high school has twelve fulltime teachers and two half time teachers. A new high school and
elementary school were built in 1972, and are located in the middle of the town on one city block. There are approximately thirty-five students enrolled in vocational agriculture, about eight students per class. The vocational agriculture program is set up on a traditional format (vo ag I, vo ag II, vo ag III and vo ag IV). Since this is a small school, the vocational agriculture program is the only program that utilizes agriculture mechanics laboratory facilities. Since a community survey has not been completed in recent years, the need for a survey currently exists.

The three groups which were included in the study were the parents of vocational agriculture students, the managers of St. Edward businesses, and the taxpayers of the St. Edward School District.

The parents of the students enrolled in vocational agriculture were polled because of the need to determine their responses toward the vocational agriculture program and its content. Since the parents play an important part in their childrens' future this respondent group is very important.

The managers of the businesses in St. Edward were polled to determine if the vocational agriculture program is preparing the students for future jobs in the community. Using businesses responses will help determine the future direction of curriculum of the vocational agriculture program.
The taxpayers of the St. Edward school district were polled to determine the responses of the people who support the school district with their tax dollars. The taxpayers' responses will help determine the feeling toward the vocational agriculture program by those who pay the bills.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine the public perception of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program. The study was completed to improve the vocational agriculture program and to gain a better understanding of the needs of the community.

Specific objectives were to:

1. Determine importance of major program areas of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program as perceived by respondent group.

2. Determine the importance of major components of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program as perceived by respondent group.

3. Determine the most important vocational agriculture instructional areas which need to be taught in St. Edward as perceived by respondent group.

4. Determine the extent to which residents are knowledgeable about FFA activities within the vocational agriculture program in St. Edward as perceived by respondent group.
5. Determine how parents, business managers and taxpayers perceive the importance of SOE and summer employment activities in the St. Edward vocational agriculture program.

6. Determine if the present vocational agriculture program is perceived as a necessary program in the St. Edward school system.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

With the recent requirement of 1080 hours of classroom time for each student imposed by the Nebraska Department of Education (Rule 15, 1987), there is additional concern about the residents' perception of the vocational agriculture program in St. Edward. Several vocational agriculture programs in the state of Nebraska have been reduced and, in future years, parts of programs may be eliminated due to declining enrollment and stressful economic situations. In a Nebraska State Department of Education report, it was observed that enrollment in vocational agriculture classes had declined approximately 21% from 1981 to 1986 (NDE, 1986). By knowing the public perceptions and opinions of the program, changes may be made within the program to strengthen it before reductions can occur.

Public relations plays a strong role in how the community perceives vocational agriculture programs.
This research report will determine if residents of the St. Edward school district know about and understand the vocational agriculture program. This information will hopefully help to improve and change the program, educate the public about vocational agriculture, and increase support for the St. Edward vocational agriculture program.

DEFINITION OF TERMS
The following definitions are provided to better understand the findings and results of this study.

St. Edward vocational agriculture program- A program of study in agriculture conducted for youth in grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 within the St. Edward School District #17, which has been evaluated and approved by the Nebraska Department of Education.

St. Edward service area- The St. Edward School District #17 and surrounding areas from which students are enrolled in the St. Edward school system.

Vocational Agriculture Program- A program which includes instruction in agribusiness, production agriculture, mechanics, FFA, SOEP, and taught by the instructor in the St. Edward vocational agriculture program.

Future Farmers of America- FFA, a national organization of students enrolled in vocational
agriculture concentrating on leadership and personal development.

**Supervised Occupational Experience Program - SOEP,** a training program to teach youth about agriculture/agribusiness through actual participation and experience in occupational placement and ownership programs.

**Resident** - Any person 18 years of age or older residing within the St. Edward service area.

**LIMITATIONS**

The following limitations are offered to provide a better understanding of the nature of this study.

1. Data were gathered only from the residents of the St. Edward school service area.

2. Data were gathered only from the heads of households or businesses in the St. Edward school service area, who were at least 18 years of age.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

With decreasing high school enrollment, the public perception of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program is a growing concern. Residents' knowledge concerning the purpose and importance of the program need to be surveyed to reveal both the needed changes as well as the satisfaction with the current St. Edward vocational agriculture program.

No other studies have been completed in the St. Edward school service area. There have been two similar studies completed in Nebraska, one by Tom Wilmes of the Allen school district and one by Douglas Malone of the St. Paul school district.

Everyday we work with a program that we understand very well; we enjoy and appreciate it. Miller (1983) asked, "What image do we have with those outside the profession? How do they perceive our program?".

Walter Schuh, a vocational agriculture instructor at Burlington-Edison High School, Bow, Washington said all instructors must ask themselves the following questions. "Where are the graduates going? What careers are available in the local community for the graduate? What skills are needed by the graduates to fill these careers?" These questions are especially important in today's local, vocational agriculture programs (Schuh, 1986).
Carter noted that an increased emphasis is being placed upon school systems for better instruction in math, science, foreign languages, and computer technology for high school graduates. This shift in educational emphasis will put increased pressure in course selection upon students. Students are becoming more interested in program selection. They and their parents are looking for programs that will provide effective instruction in meeting needs for the job market (Carter, 1983).

CURRICULUM

Lee (1982) felt curriculum was an area we should be looking at for overall program improvement. He asked, "what direction should we go with our vocational agriculture curriculum? What should be the mission of vocational-technical agricultural education? What should be the components of the program?".

Diley (1982) pointed out, "Since it is an elective, vocational agriculture classes must offer the latest information in the field of agriculture in order to be attractive to potential students. If it doesn't, the student can learn more at home and will select another course".

"Students' interest is the most important factor considered when enrolling in vocational agriculture," said Mannebach (1981). Vocational agriculture is different from the other classes in the school's
curriculum. There is not one single textbook for each class to use daily. Many outside publications, magazines, visual aids and media resources are used. The instructors learn about their students from home visits with the students and their parents. Vocational agriculture classes are a well-rounded part of the education of a student and an important part of the curriculum. Students are exposed to science by studying about animals, soil conservation, electricity, motors and computers.

A field study completed in Allen, Nebraska showed that the major components of the Allen vocational agriculture program were mechanics, animal science, SOEP, farm construction and welding (Wilmes, 1985). Math and reading were used everyday in all classes and on laboratory projects.

Leonard (1985) suggested that vocational agriculture should be included as part of the science units required for graduation. Schuh agreed that, with the effect of the excellence movement in education, the local programs will have to demonstrate how science and English are being taught in their vocational agriculture classes (Schuh, 1986).

H. O. Kunkel, Dean of the College of Agriculture at Texas A & M University stated that the curriculum in food and agriculture should provide six components for the vocational agriculture student. The first was the
fundamental understanding of the ultimate necessity of food to the health and welfare of the people and nations. Second was the fundamental understanding of the biological basis of the food chain. Third was the basic skills for physical and business management. Fourth was a basic understanding of the technology that will continue to affect the food chain. The fifth component was the basic understanding of the people in agriculture. The last component was professionalism, of those working in agriculture including the teacher of vocational agriculture. Kunkel said that all six components need to be included in the curriculum and if these components are not present, then the students are missing out (Kunkel, 1985).

Newcomb and McCracken (1985) pointed out, "Teachers will need to develop curricula for multiple purposes. They will have to be able to plan curricula that will meet the needs of students who have had a vocational interest in agriculture as well as students who intend to pursue a Ph.D. in college".

VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURAL INSTRUCTOR

Howard stated that one very important area of image building is the teacher. Today, and in years to come, the highly successful and respected agricultural teacher must dress appropriately, teach enthusiastically, be technically up-to-date, act appropriately, participate professionally, advise
honestly, and assist the community and family (Howard, 1983).

Harper and Buriak (1982) stated, "Teachers who feel good about the way they look will transfer that feeling for a more effective teaching environment".

Ron Wineinger, a past vocational agriculture student and past National FFA officer, stated that a successful teacher needs to recognize their limits and not claim mastery of an ability not possessed.

Teachers need the respect of students. Respect can be earned by different individuals in different ways. "You can be a disciplinarian who receives less respect than Rodney Dangerfield or a softer toned person who is admired and has great respect." Respect is earned and granted to vocational agriculture instructors when the instructor sets a personal example of appropriate conduct, in and out of the classroom (Wineinger, 1985). Strong role models are important for the direction of young people.

The dedicated teacher will serve such a function and live up to the expectation of students, parents and businessmen. Conrads (1985) stated, "Teachers cannot fake their true identity. It is important, therefore, for teachers to check personal standards and behavior. Young people have an uncanny ability to emulate poor habits and traits. The truly great teacher must be a cut above the rest".
The vocational agriculture instructor is unlike many of their peers in other academic positions. They usually come to school earlier and leave later. They have meetings with adults, are FFA sponsors, are involved in public relations activities, and still have time to prepare for the classroom. Teaching vocational agriculture is diversified, challenging, time consuming, interesting and rewarding. The complete agriculture instructor is an important person in the total school environment (Braksick, 1985).

An opinion poll of vocational-technical agriculture instructors was conducted in May of 1982. The findings indicated some of the major problems currently faced by vocational agriculture instructors. Some of these problems were: lack of funding, excessive job demands, lack of school administrator support, shortage of teachers, lack of student interest and student discipline (Lee, 1982).

Conrads discussed why teachers face some of these problems. He observed that rapid increases in technological development have outdated teachers and teaching materials. Therefore, teachers have to keep current which means spending more time preparing. They need updated material, which usually means requesting more money, which usually means getting less support from administration. Conrads also stated, "I salute the many dedicated vocational agriculture teachers for
their efforts and loyalty. They are truly the cornerstone of successful agribusiness" (Conrads, 1985).

TOTAL PROGRAM

Lee (1982) said that any effort in image building must be based on a quality program that exceeds minimum standards. Without a good educational program, efforts in image building will merely be whitewash.

One of the main components of a total program is the classroom laboratory. Some questions which need to be asked when talking about laboratories are: "Is your laboratory well organized, do you have enough space, and is it safe?" (Harper, 1985).

Newcomb (1982) stated that the laboratory should be orderly and should be a place for students enrolled in "vocational agriculture," not "vacational agriculture". The laboratory sets the agricultural instruction apart from the rest of the educational community. By using the laboratory, students can make principles come alive, and thus have more permanent learning (Braksick, 1985).

The favorable support of and confidence in the program by the tax payers are very important, according to Roller (1982). White pointed out that a two-way communication with emphasis on feedback between teachers and parents should be initiated at the local level (White, 1977). One way to receive feedback is
through the agricultural mechanics program, which can be positive or negative.

Another way to improve the department's image is through the SOEP's. This is the cornerstone of the vocational agriculture program. People will see the student's SOEP and realize it may have been possible only through the vocational agriculture program (Harper, 1985).

Still another way of public evaluation of the vocational agriculture program is through the FFA activities. FFA activities can be seen in the community all the time (Leonard, 1985).

Roller suggested that public approval is achieved when people look with favor on the program because they appreciate it, they like it, they believe in it, and they request it (Roller, 1982).

Phipps (1980) stated, "The residents cannot be expected to support the program unless they clearly understand the aims and purpose of the program". Phipps indicated that by securing data from residents and interpreting it effectively, a sound, well balanced program of instruction could be attained (Phipps, 1980).

Some of the responses that Wilmes (1983) found when he surveyed the residents of Allen, Nebraska were: The respondents strongly agreed that the major purpose of the vocational agriculture program should be to provide
youth with a general knowledge of agriculture. The respondents also indicated that the vocational agriculture program was not obsolete, but is a necessary program and should be available to all students. Wilmes also indicated that the Board of Education and the Advisory Council realized that the vocational agriculture program is expensive, but strongly supported it.

SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE

As observed in the review of the literature, public opinion or public image plays a major role in the effectiveness of the vocational agriculture program. There should always be an on-going program evaluation of the vocational agricultural program. This evaluation should include the program's curriculum, the activities of the vocational agriculture instructor and the overall total program. Each department's total program may vary from community to community, but should include the same basic components of instruction, SOEP and the FFA. With constant evaluation, improvement will bring about better students, teachers and programs.

It is essential to ascertain how the residents of the St. Edward school service area view the vocational agriculture program. With the image of the public recorded, changes and improvements can be made in the current vocational agriculture program. This study
will also help the instructor increase the public support and public awareness of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program.
CHAPTER III
DESIGN OF STUDY

This study was designed as a descriptive survey to determine the perceived attitudes of the residents of the St. Edward school service area toward the vocational agriculture program in St. Edward, Nebraska. This study specifically dealt with the residents' knowledge and expectations of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to survey the opinions of the residents in the St. Edward school service area concerning major aspects of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program. Specific objectives were to:

1. Determine importance of major program areas of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program as perceived by respondent group.

2. Determine the importance of major components of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program as perceived by respondent group.

3. Determine the most important vocational agriculture subjects which need to be taught in St. Edward as perceived by respondent group.

4. Determine the extent to which residents are knowledgeable about FFA activities within the
vocational agriculture program in St. Edward as perceived by respondent group.

5. Determine how parents, business managers and taxpayers perceive the importance of SOE and summer employment activities in the St. Edward vocational agriculture program.

6. Determine if the present vocational agriculture program is perceived as a necessary program in the St. Edward school system.

SAMPLE AND POPULATION

The respondent groups considered in this study included a stratified random sample of the residents of the St. Edward school service area. The populations represented in the survey included:


3. Heads of households who live in the St. Edward school service area and are normally associated with the school district as patrons or taxpayers.
SELECTION OF SAMPLE

The names of businesses in St. Edward were obtained from the Northwestern Bell telephone book. As shown in Table 1, fifty percent of the managers from 38 businesses were surveyed.

The tax paying patrons were selected from the 1985 census listing of the people in the St. Edward school service area. Table 1 illustrates that there were 471 households in the St. Edward school service area, of which 20 percent were randomly selected and mailed surveys. If the tax paying patron was a sole owner or manager of a business in the St. Edward school service area, they were not included in this group and another patron was randomly selected for participation.

The third respondent group selected was that of parents. As shown in Table 1, 50 percent of the 26 parents having students enrolled in vocational agriculture were randomly selected. After the heads of household names were selected, the parents that were in this group were identified. From the remaining parents of the students in vocational agriculture in the 1985-1986 school year, 50 percent were randomly selected. This made the total parents selected 50 percent, by using the taxpayers group and parents groups. If the parent was a sole owner or manager of a business in the St. Edward school service area, they were not included in the parent group, and another
Table 1

Percentage of sample respondents per group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Group</th>
<th>No. (Population)</th>
<th>% Used</th>
<th>No. Used</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Managers</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxpayers</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
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</table>

parent was randomly selected for participation.

Data in Table 2 identified the response rate for the 19 business managers, 94 taxpayers and 13 parents who were surveyed. The 19 business managers returned 15 completed surveys and provided a return rate of 79 percent. The 94 taxpayers returned 75 completed surveys, which provided a return rate of 80 percent. The 13 parents returned 12 completed surveys for a return rate of 92 percent. Overall, the survey return rate was 81 percent for the total sample.

PREPARATION OF THE INSTRUMENT

The data collection instrument was designed after a questionnaire used by Douglas L. Malone for the St. Paul vocational agriculture community survey (Malone, 1983). Some changes and revisions of some of the questions were made to adapt the questionnaire to the St. Edward community. The questionnaire was reviewed by a committee from the school administration and the
Table 2
Response rate per respondent group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Group</th>
<th>No. Sent (Population)</th>
<th>No. Received</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Managers</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxpayers</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>81</td>
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St. Edward School Board. Any suggestions for additions or corrections were incorporated before the survey was mailed.

The questionnaire collected information through the use of 15 primary questions. The respondents were asked to answer specific questions, Yes or No. If answered yes, then they were asked to answer certain aspects in that specific area. If they answered no, they were to move on to the next area of questions. The instrument provided the collection of data to address the following questions:

1. What specifically do residents believe is the major purpose of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program? (survey question 3)

2. What specific components of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program are perceived to be of major importance? (survey questions
3. What specifically do the residents feel are the main subjects of vocational agriculture which should be taught in the St. Edward program? (survey questions 4, 5)

4. To what extent are the residents knowledgeable about FFA activities within the vocational agriculture program in St. Edward? (survey questions 1, 6, 9, 12, 13)

5. How do specific groups of residents differ in their knowledge of SOE and summer employment activities in the St. Edward vocational agriculture program? (survey questions 1, 6, 9, 12, 13)

6. Is the present vocational agriculture program perceived as a necessary program? (survey question 14)

COLLECTION OF THE DATA

The questionnaire (Appendix A) was mailed to the respondents with all the questionnaires numbered for the purpose of mailing a follow-up letter. The questionnaire was photocopied on one side of three 8 1/2" X 11" sheets of paper. The questionnaires were coded by numbers to identify the specific respondent groups.

A brief letter of explanation, instructions and a thank you accompanied the questionnaire (Appendix B).
The respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it in a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The following procedure was used to collect the needed data:

1. A letter of introduction, instructions, questionnaire and self-addressed stamped envelope were mailed to each respondent.

2. The first reminder letter (Appendix C) was sent at the end of 10 days, asking for a response to the questionnaire.

3. After 10 more days a phone call was made to those who had not yet responded.

Individual questionnaire data were kept confidential and used only for reporting group data.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The following procedures were used in the analysis of the data:

- A code number was assigned to each questionnaire to identify the respondent's age group and respondent group.

- A code sheet (Appendix D) was designed to identify and describe each question found in the survey.

- When evaluating the importance of an area, a 1 to 4 likert type scale was used. A score of 1 identified the area as not important. A score of 2 identified the area as somewhat important. A score of 3 identified
the area as important and a score of 4 identified the area as very important.
-Data were entered directly from the questionnaire into a CMS data base using an IBM personal computer at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.
-Means, standard deviations and analysis of variance were computed for survey items that represented ratings which were considered important to the study and to the St. Edward vocational agriculture program.
-Frequency distributions and percentages were calculated to rank responses to demographic questions and to report their relationship to the study.
-The ANOVA & Tukey Post Hoc Test were used to reveal differences among specific groups for both demographic and importance ratings.
-A Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient was calculated on the entire instrument, yielding an r-value of .85.
-An independent t-test was used to determine differences between sample means of primary respondent groups and final nonrespondents. No differences were observed.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data and results presented in this chapter were based on questionnaires received from parents, business managers and taxpayers of the St. Edward Public School District, St. Edward, Nebraska. The primary purpose of the study was to determine how the public perceives the St. Edward vocational agriculture program.

This chapter is organized by the six objectives of the study, using eight tables of data to determine the public perception of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program.

Objective 1. Determine importance of major program areas of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program by as perceived respondent group.

Data in Table 3 indicate the importance of the major purposes of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program as perceived by key groups in the community. The parents, managers of businesses and taxpayers all ranked providing a general knowledge of agriculture as the major purpose of the program (3.33, 3.36 and 3.06 respectively on a 4 point scale). Teaching agribusiness ranked second in the composite column but third in the parents and taxpayers scale. Leadership was the third rated purpose of the vocational agriculture program, followed by teaching to farm and adult education. All five purposes of the vocational
Table 3

Means, standard deviations and F-values of the importance of major program areas for inclusion in the St. Edward vocational agriculture program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Area</th>
<th>Parents (n=12)</th>
<th>Business Managers (n=15)</th>
<th>Tax Payers (n=75)</th>
<th>Composite F-value (n=102)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge general information</td>
<td>M. 3.33</td>
<td>S.D. 1.56</td>
<td>R. 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. .93</td>
<td>R. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 1.40</td>
<td>R. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 1.29</td>
<td>R. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agribus.</td>
<td>M. 2.92</td>
<td>S.D. 1.44</td>
<td>R. 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and Service</td>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 1.07</td>
<td>R. 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>M. 3.17</td>
<td>S.D. .94</td>
<td>R. 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 2.86</td>
<td>R. 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 2.98</td>
<td>R. 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 2.99</td>
<td>R. 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 2.99</td>
<td>R. 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach to Farm</td>
<td>M. 2.67</td>
<td>S.D. 1.37</td>
<td>R. 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 2.64</td>
<td>R. 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 2.60</td>
<td>R. 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 2.66</td>
<td>R. 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education</td>
<td>M. 2.33</td>
<td>S.D. 1.37</td>
<td>R. 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 2.29</td>
<td>R. 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 2.57</td>
<td>R. 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 2.49</td>
<td>R. 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 2.42</td>
<td>R. 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 1.42</td>
<td>R. 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. M. = Mean, S.D. = Standard Deviation, R. = Rank
Scale: 1=Not Important, 2=Somewhat Important, 3=Important, 4=Very Important

The program were rated between 2.29 and 3.36 indicating that these program areas are of at least somewhat importance to the vocational agriculture program. With the second place ranking of agribusiness and the fourth place ranking of teaching to farm, the parents, businessmen and taxpayers may be indicating that the traditional vocational agriculture program of training for farming is becoming less important. Table 3 data indicate that there is very good uniformity of responses in how the three groups perceive the purposes
of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program. It was observed that adult education was consistently considered less important than the other four program areas by all respondent groups.

Objective 2. Determine the importance of major components of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program as perceived by respondent group.

Data presented in Table 4 reveal relationships existing between the importance of selected components of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program.

It was observed from the composite ranking that classroom instruction was considered the most important program component followed by FFA, SOE and adult education. Classroom instruction received a 3.3 composite importance rating on a 4.00 scale, FFA received a 3.06 rating, SOE received a 2.73 rating and adult education a 2.41 rating. All the areas received a rating that indicated of at least somewhat importance to the total program.

The parents of students in the vocational agriculture program felt that the classroom instruction was the most important component of the program, and rated it a 3.58 on a 4.00 scale. This is the area which the parents are the most involved in and have the greatest knowledge of the subject material. They rated the FFA a 3.25, the SOE a 2.58 and adult education a 2.25.
Table 4

Means, standard deviations and F-values of the importance of selected components of the total program by respondent group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Component</th>
<th>Parents M (n=12)</th>
<th>Business Managers M (n=15)</th>
<th>Tax Payers M (n=75)</th>
<th>Composite F-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Instruction</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFA Activities</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOE Supervision</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. M. = Mean, S.D. = Standard Deviation, R. = Rank
Scale: 1 = Not Important, 2 = Somewhat Important, 3 = Important, 4 = Very Important

The managers of businesses rated the components differently than the parents. A score of 3.43 and a standard deviation of only .76 made the FFA the most important component, followed by classroom instruction, SOE and adult education. Perhaps business managers are more exposed to the activities of the FFA through community activities and public relations efforts than the classroom, therefore, giving FFA a higher mean score.

The taxpayers rated the classroom instruction well above the other three components of the program in importance. Giving the classroom instruction a 3.21
followed by FFA (2.93), SOE (2.87), and adult education (2.41). Since the taxpayers support the school directly with their taxes they may have rated the classroom instruction as the higher of the four components.

As in Table 3 all three response group ratings were very uniform, with no statistical differences observed.

Objective 3. Determine the most important vocational agriculture instructional areas which need to be taught in St. Edward as perceived by respondent group.

While Table 4 illustrated the high importance rating of the classroom instruction component of the program, Table 5 showed which instructional areas of vocational agriculture were considered to be the most important. Ranking first in importance by all three respondent groups was the instructional area of agronomy. With scores of 3.25, 3.43 and 3.15, for parents, business managers, taxpayers respectively, and a composite score of 3.22, agronomy was clearly the instructional area considered of greatest importance in the St. Edward vocational agriculture program. Since crop production plays a very important role in the agriculture of St. Edward area it was no surprise that agronomy held the top ranking. Second in importance of the instructional areas was animal science with a
Table 5

Means, standard deviations and F-values of the importance of instructional areas of the vocational agriculture program by respondent group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Area</th>
<th>Parents (n=12)</th>
<th>Business Managers (n=15)</th>
<th>Tax Payers (n=75)</th>
<th>Composite (n=102)</th>
<th>F-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agronomy</td>
<td>M. 3.25</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 1.22</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Science</td>
<td>M. 3.25</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. .97</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agric. Mechanics</td>
<td>M. 3.08</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 1.17</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. 4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 1.12</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hort.</td>
<td>M. 2.08</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. .79</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. M.=Mean, S.D.=Standard Deviation, R.=Rank
Scale: 1=Not Important, 2=Somewhat Important, 3=Important, 4=Very Important

composite score of 3.11 followed closely by agricultural mechanics and new technology, both with a score of 3.09. Livestock production also plays an important role in the community which supports the second place importance ranking. The area of least importance was that of horticulture with a composite score of 2.11 on a 4 point scale. Horticulture may have been rated low because there is no horticulture industry in the St. Edward area and horticulture is not
currently taught in a great depth in the St. Edward vocational agriculture program.

The ratings were uniform among all groups indicating the subjects had similar importance ratings for all three response groups.

Objective 4. Determine the extent to which residents are knowledgeable about FFA activities within the vocational agriculture program in St. Edward as perceived by respondent group.

Data in Table 6 reveal the importance of selected FFA activities to the vocational agriculture program. Overall, leadership development was the top rated activity with a composite score of 2.9 followed by scholarship, community service, fairs and contests (2.85, 2.65, 2.51, 2.35 respectively). The activities rated of most importance in the FFA were mixed among the three respondent groups. Parents ranked scholarship as the most important activity, while business managers said community service was the most important. Taxpayers were the only group to rank leadership development as most important activity. Perhaps the parents are more concerned with their students grades which may be a reason for the top ranking of scholarship, whereas the business managers felt that there is a need for community service from the FFA.

In this table all three respondent groups ranked a
Table 6

Means, standard deviations and F-values of the importance of selected FFA activities by respondent group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFA Activity Area</th>
<th>Parents (n=12)</th>
<th>Business Managers (n=15)</th>
<th>Tax Payers (n=75)</th>
<th>Composite F-value (n=102)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. 3.08</td>
<td>S.D. 1.31</td>
<td>S.D. 1.28</td>
<td>R. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>R. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 1.22</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Service</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>R. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 1.08</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. 4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairs</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>R. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 1.16</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. 5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contests</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>R. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. 1.00</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. 3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. M.=Mean, S.D.=Standard Deviation, R.=Rank
Scale: 1=Not Important, 2=Somewhat Important, 3=Important, 4=Very Important.

different activity as most important. However, no real differences in importance rating scores were observed for each FFA activity area.

Objective 5. Determine how parents, businesses managers and taxpayers perceive the importance of SOE and summer employment activities in the St. Edward vocational agriculture program.

Table 7 reveals respondents' importance ratings of selected supervised occupational experience (SOE) program activities. Three areas of SOE activities were
Table 7

Means, standard deviations and F-values of the importance of selected areas of SOE by respondent groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOE Program Area</th>
<th>Parents (n=12)</th>
<th>Business Managers (n=15)</th>
<th>Tax Payers (n=75)</th>
<th>Composite Tax Payers (n=102)</th>
<th>F-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Record Keeping</td>
<td>M. 3.17</td>
<td>S.D. 1.34</td>
<td>R. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>M. 3.00</td>
<td>S.D. 1.35</td>
<td>R. 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. M. = Mean, S.D. = Standard Deviation, R. = Rank

Scale: 1=Not Important, 2=Somewhat Important, 3=Important, 4=Very Important

listed: record keeping, management and supervision.

Record keeping was ranked as the most important aspect of SOE by parents and taxpayers, with a composite rating of 2.79. Since parents are involved with the students record book from the vocational agriculture classroom it was no surprise that this activity was ranked first. taxpayers show a concern for the students to keep good records by ranking this area first. Business managers rated management as the major concern of SOE with a mean importance rating of 2.43. Perhaps the managers ranked the management aspect of SOE as most important because they are involved with the comprehensive management of their businesses more so than just the record keeping aspect.
Supervision was the lowest concern of the three but still ranked as "somewhat important" to "important" by all groups.

In Table 7 it was revealed that the overall rating by the three respondent groups was very consistent as to the importance of selected activities associated with supervised occupational experience programs. However, parents rated all three activities as being important (at least 3 on a 4-point scale) indicating that SOE is important to them.

Data in Table 8 reveal the importance of the vocational agriculture instructor's summer employment activities. It was observed that the three respondent groups had mixed reactions about the importance of the activities the instructor should be doing during the summer months of employment. Parents rated SOE supervision as the most important activity with a score of 3.00 followed by professional growth activities, FFA activities, adult education and FFA contests. The business managers listed professional growth activities as their most important concern with a score of 2.21 followed by FFA contests, SOE supervision, adult education and FFA activities.

The taxpayers listed SOE supervision as the most important activity with a score of 2.43 followed by FFA activities, FFA contests, adult education and professional growth activities. The composite scores
Table 8

Means, standard deviations and F-values of the importance of vocational agriculture instructor's summer employment activities by respondent group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer Program Area</th>
<th>Parents (n=12)</th>
<th>Business Managers (n=15)</th>
<th>Tax Payers (n=75)</th>
<th>Composite F-value (n=102)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOE Supervision</td>
<td>M. 3.00</td>
<td>S.D. 1.28</td>
<td>R. 1</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. 2.75</td>
<td>S.D. 1.22</td>
<td>R. 2</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Growth Activities</td>
<td>M. 2.58</td>
<td>S.D. 1.08</td>
<td>R. 3</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFA Activities</td>
<td>M. 2.42</td>
<td>S.D. 1.00</td>
<td>R. 5</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFA Contests</td>
<td>M. 2.50</td>
<td>S.D. 1.38</td>
<td>R. 4</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education</td>
<td>M. 2.50</td>
<td>S.D. 1.38</td>
<td>R. 4</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. M. = Mean, S.D. = Standard Deviation, R. = Rank Scale: 1 = Not Important, 2 = Somewhat Important, 3 = Important, 4 = Very Important * = F-value indicating significant differences at p > .05 level

indicated that SOE supervision was most important activity (2.39) followed by professional growth, FFA activities, FFA contests, and adult education.

The parents and taxpayers scored all five areas as somewhat important to important while the business managers scored four of the five as not important. A reason for the business managers low ranking of the vocational agriculture instructor's summer activities could be that they are not directly involved with the
vocational agriculture program during the summer and may not be aware of the importance of a total year long program. Whereas the parents and taxpayers are involved through SOE visits and community activities conducted by the program throughout the year. It was observed that business managers ranked the overall importance of the vocational agriculture instructor's summer activities lower than other groups.

Statistically significant differences (P>.05) were observed between importance ratings of respondent groups in the summer activity areas of SOE supervision and FFA activities. A Tukey Post Hoc Test indicated that the business manager group rated the importance of SOE activities in the summer significantly less important (1.71) than parents rated SOE activities (3.00). Similar differences were noted with FFA activities during the summer (1.43 and 2.58 importance ratings for agribusiness managers and parents respectively).

Objective 6. Determine if the present vocational agriculture program is perceived as a necessary program in the St. Edward school system.

Data presented in Table 9 show the feelings toward the importance of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program in the high school curriculum. This table includes importance ratings from the three respondent groups and a composite rating.
Table 9

Means, standard deviations and F-values of respondents toward the importance of the vocational agriculture program in the St. Edward high school curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents (n=12)</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business (n=15)</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TaxPayer (n=75)</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite (n=102)</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-value</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Scale: 1=Not Important, 2=Somewhat Important, 3=Important, 4=Very Important.

Parents rated the importance of vocational agriculture program highest (3.75 on a scale of 4.00) or as a very important part of the curriculum of the school. The managers of businesses rated the program as a 3.71 and the taxpayers rated it as a 3.36, for a composite rating of a 3.48. With an average rating of 3.48 on a scale of 4.00 it may indicate that the vocational agriculture program is considered to be an important to very important component of the St. Edward High School curriculum. It was further observed that all groups rated the necessity of vocational agriculture program consistently rated at 3.5 or above, indicating a uniform, positive perception of the vocational agriculture program in St. Edward High School.
Data in Table 10 show the importance rating for the necessity of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program as a part of the total curriculum by age of respondent.

The age group from 61-70 years of age rated the program the highest giving it a score of 3.78 on a 4.00 scale. The age group of 41-50 rated the program next highest with a 3.67, followed by the age group of 51-60 with a rating of 3.63, 31-40 with a rating of 3.50, 71 and older with a rating of 3.45, and the age group of 20-30 with a rating of 3.27. The overall importance rating of the combined age groups was a score of 3.55. This data suggest that the St. Edward vocational agriculture program is perceived to be rated between important and very important to all age groups as being a part of the St. Edward school curriculum.

As the age groups became younger the rating declined indicating that the younger age groups may feel that the program is of less importance today than it was in the past. It may also be that younger respondents have yet to see the value of the program in long-term benefits to the individual. The age group which ranked the program the highest may have been the parents of St. Edward students when the St. Edward FFA chapter was ranked number one in the state of Nebraska. However, all age groups were consistent in their rating, indicating a positive perception of the value
Table 10

Means and standard deviations of the necessity of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program in the high school curriculum by age of respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group (Years)</th>
<th>(N)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-up</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Scale: 1=Not Important, 2=Somewhat Important, 3=Important, 4=Very Important of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program.
SUMMARY

The primary purpose of the study was to determine the public perception of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program.

The population for this study consisted of three respondent groups including parents of vocational agriculture students, taxpayers of the St. Edward School District, and the managers of businesses operating in the St. Edward community. From these three respondent groups a random sample was selected for participation in the study.

A mailed survey instrument was used to collect the data for the study. All randomly selected respondents received a questionnaire which they were to return.

When completing the questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate the selected program areas using the following rating scale: A score of "1" identified an item "not important", a score of "2" identified an item as "somewhat important", a score of "3" identified an item as "important" and a score of "4" identified an item as "very important".

Means, standard deviations, and analysis of variance were computed for each area to determine the importance of each component of the vocational agriculture program. Frequency distribution and percentages were used to rank responses to demographic
questions and to report their relationship to the study. The ANOVA & Tukey Post Hoc Test was used to reveal the differences among mean importance ratings reported by specific respondent groups.

The response rate for the business manager's was 79 percent, with 15 out of 19 manager's responding. The tax payer's response rate was 80 percent, with 75 of 94 surveys returned. The parent's response rate was the best with a 92 percent return, with 12 out of 13 responding.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Parents, business managers and taxpayers all perceived that providing general knowledge of agriculture was the major purpose of the vocational agriculture program, followed in importance by teaching agribusiness, providing leadership, teaching to farm and adult education, in that order. Of the five program areas which were polled, all were ranked in the "somewhat important" to "important" category.

The major component of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program was observed to be providing classroom instruction. The parents and taxpayers ranked this area as most important while the business managers ranked it second. FFA activities were a close second in the composite ranking followed by SOE and adult education.
The highest rated instructional area of the vocational agriculture program was observed to be in the area of agronomy. Business managers along with the taxpayers rated this area most important while parents ranked animal science as most important. The composite ratings indicated the order of importance to be agronomy, animal science, agricultural mechanics, new technology and horticulture.

All three response groups were knowledgeable about FFA activities, but each group rated a different FFA area as their choice of most importance. The parents ranked scholarship as their number one FFA activity, the business managers ranked community service as the most important FFA activity, and the taxpayers ranked leadership development as their major concern. The composite ratings for the importance of FFA activities indicated the areas of importance to be leadership development, scholarship, community service, fairs, and contests.

Record keeping was identified as the most important component of the SOE to be included in the St. Edward vocational agriculture program, followed by management and supervision. The respondents rated the vocational agriculture instructor's summer activities in order of importance as SOE supervision (1st), professional growth (2nd), FFA activities (3rd), contests preparation (4th) and adult education (5th).
The business managers had scores significantly lower than the taxpayers and parents when evaluating summer employment activities. Lower scores may indicate a lack of knowledge about summer employment activities, or simply that they view summer employment activities as being less important than regular school year activities.

All respondent groups felt that the St. Edward vocational agriculture program was a necessary part of the St. Edward high school curriculum. The age group which ranked the necessity of the program the highest was the ages of 61-70 years.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of this study:

1. The major program area of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program is the area of providing general knowledge of agriculture. This area was rated as most important by the respondent groups. Agribusiness education was rated higher than providing instruction on farming, indicating that more emphasis needs to be placed in this area, and less on traditional farming practices.

2. The major component of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program was the component of providing effective classroom
instruction. This may indicate that curriculum concerns are more important to St. Edward clientele than the supplementary activities of FFA and SOE. Adult education is not of major importance to St. Edward clientele groups at this time.

3. The most important vocational agriculture instructional area which should be taught in the St. Edward program was in the area of agronomy. This area was rated most important by the respondent groups. Animal science, agricultural mechanics, and new technology were all rated important by all respondent groups. Instruction in horticulture was shown to be of little importance to the respondent groups.

4. The extent to which the residents were knowledgeable about the FFA activities of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program was high. The FFA activity which the respondent groups rated as somewhat important and ranked as the highest was in the area of leadership development.

5. The most important area of the SOE and summer employment activities in the St. Edward vocational agriculture program were the areas of record keeping and SOE supervision. Record
keeping, management, and supervision were all rated as somewhat important by the respondent groups in SOE. SOE supervision also rated somewhat important in the area of instructor's summer employment activities along with professional growth activities, FFA activities, contests and adult education.

6. All respondent groups perceived the St. Edward vocational agriculture program as a strong and important part of the St. Edward high school curriculum. Respondent groups rated the program to be very important with the composite rating of 3.48 on a 4 scale. The age group which rated the program the highest was the age of 61-70 years. The lowest age group rating came from the ages of 20-30.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the conclusions drawn from this study the following actions were recommended:

1. The vocational agriculture program should include a general overview of the agriculture industry to provide a general knowledge of agriculture and strengthen the curriculum in the area of agribusiness instruction. This was also found to be true in a field study by Wilmes (1983). The vocational agriculture
instructor needs to develop a curriculum to meet the needs identified in this study.

2. The departmental advisory council should be used to constantly review and update the vocational agriculture curriculum and to assist the vocational agriculture instructor in the revision and updating of the curriculum.

3. The vocational agriculture program should stress the importance of effective classroom instruction over other areas of instruction in a vocational agriculture program. This area should be of high priority while maintaining an emphasis on the FFA and SOE programs.

4. School district patrons should be made more aware of the opportunities of Adult Education before an Adult Education program is considered in the St. Edward school district.

5. FFA activities should remain an important area of the vocational agriculture program and should be of high importance.

6. The instructional area of agronomy should be expanded into more detailed units of instruction. More resources from the vocational agriculture budget should be channeled toward this instructional area to improve the materials to teach agronomy.
7. The curriculum of animal science, agriculture mechanics, and new technology should remain constant through the updating of resources and materials of instruction.

8. The instructional area of horticulture should not be expanded in the vocational agriculture curriculum at this time because of the lack of support by the respondent groups.

9. The area of leadership development should be stressed in all activities of the vocational agriculture and FFA program. More emphasis should be placed on FFA leadership activities and events.

10. SOE supervision as part of the summer employment activities should be a high concern of the vocational agriculture instructor. While on SOE visits, record keeping should be stressed and discussed with the student and parents.

11. Management and supervision of students SOE during the summer employment of the vocational agriculture instructor should be maintained.

12. Public relations should be kept up throughout the year to maintain and improve the support of the vocational agriculture program by the people in the St. Edward community.
A follow up survey should be completed within five years to determine the important components of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program and how the respondent groups' ideas have changed.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A

Survey Questionnaire
Please complete the survey by responding to the following questions.

Please state your age at the time of this survey.______________________________

1. Are you aware that St. Edward High School has a vocational agriculture program? (circle one)
   YES
   NO

If yes, please answer the following questions. If no, go to question nine.

Please circle the number which best indicates your feelings on the next three questions.

0=No response - do not know
1=Not Important - not needed in the total program
2=Somewhat Important - needed in total program if time allows
3=Important - needed as part of the total program
4=Very Important - must be included as part of the total program

2. Please rate the following component as to their importance to the St. Edward vocational agriculture program:
   
   A. Supervised Occupational Experience Program (SOEP) 0 1 2 3 4
   B. Future Farmers of America (FFA) 0 1 2 3 4
   C. Adult and Young Farmers Education 0 1 2 3 4
   D. Classroom Instruction (in school) 0 1 2 3 4

3. The major purpose of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program should be to:

   A. Train students to go back and farm 0 1 2 3 4
   B. Train Students for employment in agribusiness 0 1 2 3 4
   C. Train students to become leaders 0 1 2 3 4
   D. Provide a general background of knowledge about agriculture 0 1 2 3 4
   E. Teach farming adults efficiency-improving skills 0 1 2 3 4

4. How important do you feel the following areas of instruction are for the St. Edward vocational agriculture program:

   A. Animal Science 0 1 2 3 4
   B. Horticulture (flowers, gardens, trees, etc.) 0 1 2 3 4
   C. Agronomy (crops) 0 1 2 3 4
   D. Agriculture Mechanics (motors, welding, buildings) 0 1 2 3 4
   E. New Technology (computers, farm equipment, etc.) 0 1 2 3 4
5. Please rank the following areas of instruction according to the importance that they should receive in the classroom.

(1 being the most important, 6 being the least important)

A. Animal Science  
B. Horticulture  
C. Agronomy  
D. Agriculture Mechanics  
E. Agriculture Economics  
F. New Technology

6. Are you aware that students must have a home farm project, or agribusiness occupation as their supervised occupational experience program (SOEP) which is required as part of the vocational agriculture program? (circle one)

YES  NO

If yes, please answer the following questions. If no, go to question 9.

PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH BEST INDICATES YOUR FEELING ON THE NEXT TWO QUESTIONS.

0 = No response - do not know  
1 = Not Important - not needed in the total program  
2 = Somewhat Important - needed in total program if time allows  
3 = Important - needed as part of the total program  
4 = Very Important - must be included as part of the total program

7. Please circle the number which best indicates your feelings on the following statements.

A. Record keeping is an important part of the SOEP program.  
B. Students need supervision of their SOEP projects year round, to provide hands on experience.  
C. SOEP projects teach responsibility by giving the students something of their own to manage.

8. Please circle the number which best indicates your feelings on each statement. In the summer, the vocational agriculture teacher's most important duties are:

A. Supervision of SOEP projects  
B. FFA activities (leadership camp, meetings)  
C. Contests, Fairs, and Shows  
D. Professional Improvement  
E. Young Farmer Supervision and Activities

9. Are you aware that the FFA is a part of the St. Edward vocational agriculture program? (circle one)

YES  NO
If yes, please answer the following questions. If no, go to question 12.

PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH BEST INDICATES YOUR FEELING ON THE NEXT QUESTION.

0 = No response - do not know
1 = Not Important - not needed in the total program
2 = Somewhat Important - needed in total program if time allows
3 = Important - needed as part of the total program
4 = Very Important - must be included as part of the total program

10. Please indicate how you feel on the following FFA activities.

A. Contests
   0 1 2 3 4
B. Leadership development activities
   0 1 2 3 4
C. Scholarship activities
   0 1 2 3 4
D. Fairs, Livestock Shows
   0 1 2 3 4
E. Community Support activities
   0 1 2 3 4

11. Please rank the following areas in the St. Edward vocational agriculture program as to improvement needed.

(1 = most improvement needed, 5 = least improvement needed)

A. Contest
B. Leadership development activities
C. Scholarship activities
D. Fairs, Livestock Shows
E. Community Support activities

12. Are you aware that the St. Edward vocational agriculture program has an FFA Alumni group? (circle one)

   Yes
   No

13. Do you feel that their should be an Adult Education class or Young Farmers started in the St. Edward vocational agriculture program, dealing with subjects in agriculture? (circle one)

   Yes
   No

14. Do you feel the St. Edward vocational agriculture program is a necessary part of the total curriculum at St. Edward High School? (circle one)

   Yes - Very Important
   Yes - Somewhat Important
   Yes - Important
   No - Not Important

Thank You for your time and input. Please add any comments that you might have concerning the St. Edward vocational agriculture program on the back of this page.
APPENDIX B

Cover Letter
37 FFA activities - leadership

38 FFA activities - Scholarship

39 FFA activities - fairs

40 FFA activities - community support

41 Rank contest

42 Rank leadership

43 Rank scholarship

44 Rank fairs

45 Rank community support

46 Aware of FFA alumni

47 Should have adult ed

48 St. Ed. vo ag necessary

49 Respondent vs Non-Respondent

1 = Not important 2 = Somewhat important 3 = Important 4 = Very important

0 = Missing data

1 = Not important 2 = Somewhat important 3 = Important 4 = Very important

0 = Missing data

1 = Not important 2 = Somewhat important 3 = Important 4 = Very important

0 = Missing data

1 = Not important 2 = Somewhat important 3 = Important 4 = Very important

1 = Actual 1 - 5

1 = Actual 1 - 5

1 = Actual 1 - 5

1 = Actual 1 - 5

1 = Yes 2 = No

1 = Yes 2 = No

1 = Very important 2 = Important 3 = Somewhat important 4 = Not important

1 = Respondent 2 = Non-Respondent