

CTE Regional Advisory Council  
Agriculture Breakout Session  
University of Arkansas Community College Morrilton  
3/29/2016  
Minutes from Secessions I and II

In Attendance:

Dr. Justin Kilingsworth- Ag Professor-ATU  
Andrew Guffey- Arkansas Farm Bureau  
Angie Scott- Tyson Foods  
Rodney Wiedower (Moderator)- Greenbrier Ag Ed  
Gordon Eichelberger (Minutes Taker)- Quitman Ag Ed  
Chad Mooney (Note Taker)- Clinton Ag Ed  
Seth Taylor- Nemo Vista Ag Ed  
Nathan Bowie- Guy-Perkins Ag Ed  
Chris Bacchus- Ar Department of Career Education  
Gary Gray- Danville Ag Ed  
Becca Spinks- Greenbrier Ag Ed  
Brandon Lewis- Greenbrier Ag Ed  
Justin Wiedower- Clinton Ag Ed  
Joey Dold- Koontz Electric  
David Heffington-

Several more I can't think of

Subject: What skills can Agriculture Education Instructors teach our students to help them enter into an Agriculture Career?

Action: After the panel held discussion, the following ideas were presented:

- Continue to develop “soft skills” including:
  - Proper use of social media
  - How to work with other people (teamwork)
  - Attitude and Aptitude
  - Ability to lead others is very important
  - Problem solving
  - Ability to adapt
  - Take direction
  - Stay on task
  - Dress code
  - Importance of Safety
  - Money Management
  - Ability to communicate and adjust to their audience
  - Understand/interpret and use data
  - Develop a “Personal Brand”
    - How are you? What do you stand for?

- Discussion was lead by Andrew Guffey on how Agriculture Education Programs are already instilling these “soft skills” in students through Career Development Events (CDE’s) and Leadership Development Events (LDE’s).
  - Keep doing what we are doing. FFA is teaching the “soft skills” the industry is looking for
    - More focus on showcasing the value of an Agriculture Education Program to counselors and administration. This will help in attaining the students who will benefit from this type of program.
- The advancement and promotion of Apprenticeship programs
  - There is a great demand for skilled laborers
    - Tyson Foods is in such need for maintenance workers they are offering sign on bonuses for hourly positions.
  - Becoming a skill laborer can be very profitable
  - Gives students insight to possible careers and to get a head start once they enter the workforce.
  - Not every student will, or needs to, go to college. Some will benefit more by entering the workforce straight out of high school

Subject: What type of technology do Agriculture Education Programs need and how can it be acquired? (How do we bridge the gap between Industry and Classroom?)

Action: After the panel held discussion, the following ideas were presented

- The possibility of adapting frameworks and or courses offered to meet local needs.
  - Keep teaching basic skills from given frameworks, but adapt to local resources. Example: Small Gas Engines course could focus more on marine engine if in a area such as Heber Springs.
  - Get industry in the classroom to be guest speakers and get students into industry setting though field trips.
  - Use universal language with what our students are doing. Such as:
    - Instead of a student putting on their job application that they had an SAE (Supervised Agriculture Experience), say they owned or operated their project.
    - Instead of a student saying they were on a livestock judging team, say they used logical reasoning to select livestock.
    - Have terms be understanding on what is being done in Ag Ed Programs.

Subject: What can be done to clear up misconceptions, about Agriculture Education Programs, to help students, guidance counselors, and school administrators understand how beneficial these programs are in preparing students for college and/or the workforce.

Action: After the panel held discussion, the following ideas were presented:

- Have a presence at superintendents and curriculum conferences
- Inform school boards, guidance counselors, and school admin about:

- We (Agriculture Educators) have to do a better job telling our story.
  - Social Media accounts
    - Monthly student features
    - Posting about former students success
    - Allow students to tell their story to the public
  - Attend school board meetings
  - Get administration and/or counselors involved in program to see the benefit (value), first hand, that the FFA can have for students
  - Highlight that what makes our kids special is that they put in all the time and effort even when no one is watching on the sidelines

Subject: Is certification, for high school students, a priority or needed at all by the industry? Would it be more appealing to the industry if students had some sort of certification?

Action: The panel held discussion on the following topics:

- As of right now there is only one certification program that Tyson is using and that is through ITT Tech. It is called the FIT program. Everything else they will train their employees themselves.
- Discussion was held about creating a Leadership certification program. Industry is very interested in potential employees having been exposed to leadership development.
- Currently Arkansas Farm Bureau is investigating what it would take to install a certification program into Agriculture Education, and if that is something that would be beneficial to students.
  - Georgia Agriculture Education has already put together a program to certify its Ag Ed completers upon graduation.

Subject: How can we utilize and improve on the apprenticeship program?

Action: The panel held discussion on the following topics:

- Currently there is an idea to start a program that helps students focus on preparing for a career in the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade that would allow them the opportunity to participate in an apprenticeship program while a junior and senior in high school. This program would be ran through UACCM and upon graduation these students would receive a high school diploma and a degree from UACCM in the area they focused on.
- Most skilled trades employers will pay for their employees to attend the apprenticeship classes; maybe this is something that a high school student can also do.