

INTEREST IN THE NATIONAL FUTURE FARMER MAGAZINE
AS EXPRESSED BY FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA
WITH DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONAL GOALS

by 

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AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF AUTHOR

The author was born in Atchison, Kansas on June 26, 1943 to Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence H. Erpelding, Sr., who lived on a farm near Lancaster, Kansas. He graduated from St. Louis Parochial Grade School in May of 1957 and from Atchison County Community High School in May, 1961.

In September of 1961 the author entered Kansas State University. In June of 1965 he graduated with a B.S. degree in Agricultural Education.

After completion of his B.S. degree the author accepted a vocational agriculture instructor position at Newton High School and the Central Kansas Area Vocational Technical School in Newton, Kansas. He taught there from 1965 until 1967 at which time he took a position as regional advertising manager for The National Future Farmer in Alexandria, Virginia. In February of 1968 he enrolled in graduate school at Kansas State University. He taught agricultural mechanics in the Department of Agricultural Engineering at Kansas State University from September, 1968 until June, 1969.

The author was married to Donna Spachek of Lincolnville, Kansas on June 25, 1966.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study comprised an investigation of reader interest in the editorial content of The National Future Farmer as stated by Future Farmers of America who expressed different occupational goals.

Root indicated that magazines may have three goals; to make money, to serve, and to promote ideologies and ideas.¹ The primary purpose of The National Future Farmer has been to serve the FFA members in their vocational, educational, and recreational interest.²

It was further pointed out by Root that the effectiveness of any magazine in meeting its goals was dependent upon decisions that retained or altered present editorial formulas. Whether a particular magazine was for the masses or for a specialized audience, a discussion of formula inevitably underscored the "reader-centeredness" of modern journalism.

¹Robert Root, Modern Magazine Editing, (Dubuque, Iowa; Wm. C. Brown Co., Inc., 1966), pp. 48-49.

²The National Future Farmer, Statement of Editorial Character and Objectives, (Alexandria, Virginia; Future Farmers of America), p. 1.

Magazines were planned, and must be planned to appeal to the purchasers.³

"Changes in journalistic approach occur constantly because public taste is constantly changing . . .,"⁴ and/or the characteristics and goals differed within the audience. The test of a publication formula came in the reaction of the consumer.⁵ Peterson stated that those publishers who "were reluctant to alter their editorial formulas when changing times and changing interests" occurred helped to explain magazine mortality.⁶

Binkley and McCormick stated, "Since the passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963 hundreds of programs in off-farm agricultural occupations have been launched."⁷ Until 1963 the Smith Hughes Act dictated that vocational agriculture programs be developed that provided for the education of persons over fourteen years of age who had entered upon or were

³Robert Root, Modern Magazine Editing, (Dubuque, Iowa; Wm. C. Brown Co., Inc., 1966), p. 45.

⁴Charles E. Rogers, Reporting FFA News, (Ames; The Iowa State College Press, 1941), p. 62.

⁵Robert Root, Modern Magazine Editing, (Dubuque, Iowa; Wm. C. Brown Co., Inc., 1966), p. 45.

⁶Theodore B. Peterson, Magazines in the Twentieth Century, (Urbana; The University of Illinois Press, 1956), p. 163.

⁷Binkley and McCormick, "Teacher Education for Program Development of Off-Farm Agricultural Occupations," The Agricultural Education Magazine. Volume 41, No. 7, (January, 1969), p. 158.

preparing to enter upon the work of the farm.⁸

Section 10b of the Vocational Education Act of 1963 stated that moneys allotted for agriculture "may be used for vocational education in any occupation involving knowledge and skills in agricultural subjects, whether or not such occupation involves work on the farm or of the farm home, and such education may be provided without directed or supervised practice on the farm."⁹

Ralph Woodin pointed out that in 1968 "one out of every three vocational agriculture departments offered specialized courses in off-farm agricultural occupations."¹⁰ These new programs allow students of vocational agriculture to pursue an education that will equip them to enter a multitude of occupations.

It was obvious to this writer that as FFA members were exposed to an ever increasing number of programs in vocational agriculture their occupational goals became even more diverse. Some students hoped to enter directly into farming or ranching. Others were interested primarily in specialized

⁸Lloyd J. Phipps, Handbook on Agricultural Education in Public Schools, (Danville, Illinois; The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc., 1965), p. 17.

⁹United States Congress, United States Statutes at Large, Vol. 77, (Washington; Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 403.

¹⁰Ralph Woodin, "Teaching Vocational Agriculture," The National Future Farmer, Vol. 17, No. 2, (December-January, 1968-1969), p. 39.

areas such as horticulture, agricultural engineering technology, agricultural sales and retailing, or any of the many other agricultural related occupations. Yet, other students planned to enter into nonagricultural occupations.

The questions which presented themselves to this writer were: Did the interest in the editorial content of The National Future Farmer vary with the occupational goals of its readers? Was the magazine serving the interest of all factions of its readership regardless of the readers' expressed occupational goals?

The National Future Farmer's audience was evaluated through surveys, readership studies, and at staff meetings. In the February-March 1969 issue of The National Future Farmer the editor called upon readers to submit their comments regarding the editorial content of the magazine.¹¹ It was in response to that call that this study was made.

II. PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

The purposes of this study were (1) to determine the levels of interest in the editorial content of The National Future Farmer as expressed by Future Farmers of America, and (2) to investigate whether there was a difference in the stated levels of interest among FFA members who indicated different occupational goals.

¹¹Wilson Carnes, "Word with the Editor," The National Future Farmer, (February-March, 1969), p. 14.

III. HYPOTHESIS FOR THE STUDY

A null hypothesis was used to analyze the data collected in this study. "A null hypothesis does not necessarily reflect the scientist's expectations but is used primarily because it is fitted to our statistical techniques, many of which are aimed at measuring the likelihood that a difference found is truly greater than zero."¹²

The null hypothesis stated that there was no significant difference in the stated level of interest in specific editorial content of The National Future Farmer among FFA members whose expressed occupational goals were to enter (1) farming or ranching, (2) agricultural related occupations, or (3) nonagricultural occupations after completion of their formal education.

IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this study, certain terms were identified and defined as they had special significance. The definitions given in this section were not necessarily those customarily used.

Agricultural related occupations. Any occupation other than farming or ranching which involved the need for knowledge and skills in agricultural subjects.

¹²Walter R. Borg, Educational Research: An Introduction, (New York; David McKay Co., Inc., 1967), p. 32.

Agricultural articles. Those articles which dealt with the production, management, marketing, etc., of live-stock, poultry, crops and other agricultural products.

Agricultural mechanics articles. Those articles which had to do with the construction, repair, management, maintenance and operations of agricultural machinery and equipment.

Article. Any story that was not a regular portion of the magazine which could be identified by titles that did not reappear in consecutive issues. ("Breaking the Entry Barrier" was an exception and was considered as an article.)

Career articles. Those articles having to do with the opportunities, skills required, and educational levels required in various occupations.

Department. A regular section found in consecutive issues which were designated by the same title. ("Breaking the Entry Barrier" was an exception and was considered as an article.)

Editorial content. The articles and departments which made up the magazine. (Excluded all advertising.)

Editorial formula. The elements which comprised the magazine and the amount of each. Specifically the formula might have included articles, fiction, illustrations, news, departments, editorials, poetry, cartoons and jokes, filler and miscellaneous.

Farm or ranch. A unit which provided the main source of income for the farm family.

Farming and ranching. Those occupations which had to do with the management and/or operation, individually or in partnership, of a farm or ranch.

FFA articles. Those articles concerned with activities or achievements of the National FFA Organization, State FFA Associations, and local FFA chapters or their members.

Nonagricultural occupations. Those occupations which did not require a knowledge or skill in agricultural subjects.

Occupational goal. The occupation which an individual intended to enter and will provide him with the major portion of his income.

Off-farm agricultural occupations. Any occupation other than farming or ranching which required knowledge and skills in agricultural subjects.

Recreational articles. Those articles which dealt with the recommended procedures and safety of hunting, fishing, other outdoor sports and recreational activities.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

A search for related literature was made by the author in Farrell Library, the journalism library in Kedzie Hall, and the Agricultural Education Office, all of which are located at Kansas State University. Additional study was made in the author's personal library.¹

The review of literature related to the problem under investigation in this study included (1) a brief history of The National Future Farmer, (2) a description of the changes which occurred in vocational agriculture programs and in the characteristics of vocational agriculture students, (3) related literature, and (4) related research.

I. HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL FUTURE FARMER MAGAZINE

According to John Farrar, a national magazine designed especially for Future Farmers of America had been discussed as early as 1929. However, he pointed out that the financial problem was a tremendous barrier.²

Farrar further indicated that through the years the

¹See Autobiography.

²John Farrar, FFA at 25, (Alexandria, Virginia: Future Farmers Supply Service, 1956), p. 54.

organization's membership increased, the Future Farmers Supply Service and National FFA Calendar went into business and a backlog of World War II bonds had accumulated which put the National Organization in excellent financial condition.³

Farrar told of the final decision to establish a national publication:

When the student officers and board of directors met in Washington in January, 1952, they decided the FFA was finally in a position to finance the starting of a national magazine. New polls of the states had indicated overwhelming support by the members.⁴

Farrar gave additional information regarding the new magazine:

They (student officers and board of directors) passed motions stipulating that the magazine be issued four times a year, that it be mailed directly to the members' homes, and that the subscription price be \$.25 per year or 5 years for \$1.00. The name selected was The National Future Farmer.⁵

The Official Manual for Future Farmers of America stated that The National Future Farmer, owned and published by the FFA, became a bimonthly in 1956.⁶ FFA members paid subscription rates to receive the magazine until 1967. It was voted at the 38th Annual FFA Convention that the

³Ibid., p. 55.

⁴Ibid., p. 55.

⁵Ibid., p. 55.

⁶Future Farmers of America, Official Manual for Future Farmers of America, (Alexandria, Virginia: Future Farmers Supply Service, (1967), p. 16.

membership dues include a subscription to The National Future Farmer.⁷

The National Future Farmer issued nearest to the statement of ownership, management and circulation filing date on September 26, 1968, had a paid circulation of 463,552.⁸ Although circulation was approaching the half million mark in 1968 the magazine was never intended to be a profit making enterprise. Farrar stated, "As funds accrue, they can be used to improve the quality and size of the publication, and set aside for operating capital and reserves."⁹

II. CHANGES IN VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS AND IN THE CHARACTER- ISTICS OF VOCATIONAL AGRI- CULTURE STUDENTS

Most likely, the greatest stimulus to activate change in vocational agricultural programs across our nation in the 1960's was the Vocational Education Act of 1963.

As stated in the Declaration of Purpose in the Vocational Education Act of 1963, the intent of the law is:

⁷Future Farmers of America, 1965 Proceedings of the 38th Annual Convention of the Future Farmers of America, (Washington, D.C.: Future Farmers of America, 1965), p. 28.

⁸V. Stanley Allen, "Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation," The National Future Farmer, Vol. 17, No. 3, (February-March, 1969), p. 42.

⁹John Farrar, FFA at 25, (Alexandria, Virginia: Future Farmers Supply Service, 1956), p. 55.

. . . to maintain, extend and improve existing programs of vocational education, to develop new programs of vocational education and to provide part-time employment for youths who need the earnings . . . so that persons of all ages in all communities . . . will have ready access to vocational training or retraining . . . which is realistic in the light of actual or anticipated opportunities for gainful employment and which is suited to their needs, interests, and ability to benefit from such training.¹⁰

Dr. W. M. Arnold, assistant commissioner for vocational and technical education, stated that the greatest need for change in vocational agriculture was to "review the instructional program so that it will include other agricultural occupations in addition to farming."¹¹

In response to the 1963 Act instructional programs have been changed. The Silver Lake Regional High School at Kingston, Massachusetts, developed an agricultural curriculum which included four major courses: horticulture, service technology, food distribution, and agriculture science.¹²

Fitts told of a new program in cooperative part-time agriculture, which included a schedule of work experiences and a personalized course of study.¹³ The training included

¹⁰United States Congress, United States Statutes at Large, Vol. 77, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 403.

¹¹W. M. Arnold, "Questions and Answers on the Vocational Education Act of 1963," The Agricultural Education Magazine, Vol. 38, No. 1 (July, 1965), p. 4.

¹²George E. Fraser, "A Four Phase Curriculum for Farm Related Occupations," The Agricultural Education Magazine, Vol. 37, No. 6 (January, 1965), p. 174.

¹³James Fitts, "Our Changing Role," The Agricultural Education Magazine, Vol. 39, No. 5 (November, 1966), pp. 102-103.

a minimum of fifteen hours of employment per school week at an agricultural business. Fitts stated, "This program has been extremely successful this past year, its first in Texas, and is being expanded during the 1966-67 school year. From 10 schools it will increase to approximately 90-95 . . ."14

In addition to the different types and variations of programs in vocational agriculture previously mentioned, Phipps pointed out that there were programs in vocational agriculture designed "to educate present and prospective farmers for proficiency in farming."15

Gehlbach found that of the 1941 and 1948 high school graduates who had received two or more units of instruction in vocational agriculture, 48.8 per cent and 42.3 per cent respectively were farming in 1955.16

Forms submitted by vocational agriculture teachers in Kansas to the State Office for Vocational Education showed the 1965 graduates of vocational agriculture were involved in the following activities or occupations four months after graduation: farming, 14.8 per cent; related occupations, 9.2 per cent; continued in school, 50.8 per cent; armed forces,

14Ibid.

15Lloyd J. Phipps, Handbook on Agricultural Education in Public Schools, (Danville, Illinois: The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc., 1965), p. 5.

16W. R. Gehlbach, "Study of the Present Occupational Status of 1941 and 1948 Kansas High School Graduates Having Completed Two or More Units of Vocational Agriculture," (Unpublished Master's Report, Kansas State University, Manhattan, 1955), p. 20.

7.8 per cent; unemployed, 2.2 per cent, and status unknown, 15.2 per cent.¹⁷

Similar forms completed by Kansas vocational agriculture teachers in 1968 showed 12.6 per cent of the 1968 graduates of vocational agriculture were farming; 12.1 per cent were employed in related occupations, 54.5 per cent continued in school, 9.7 per cent entered the armed forces, .7 per cent were unemployed, and the status was unknown for 10.4 per cent.¹⁸

Studies have shown that there have been students enrolled in vocational agriculture who did not intend to enter either farming or ranching or agricultural related occupations. In 1967, National FFA Officers indicated that 23.2 per cent of the FFA members surveyed planned to enter careers in non-agricultural fields.¹⁹

A good explanation of why students, although they did not intend to enter agricultural occupations, have enrolled in vocational agriculture courses was given by Leimbach in his study:

¹⁷C. C. Eustace, State Supervisor for Vocational Education in Agriculture, Kansas State Board for Vocational Education, (Telephone call, April 21, 1969, to Lawrence H. Erpelding, Jr., Manhattan, Kansas.)

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Monte Reese and Gary Swan, How Farm Youth Look and Listen, (Alexandria, Virginia: Future Farmers of America, 1967), pp. 20-21.

Vocational agriculture was most helpful to the students in their present occupations in terms of handling the skills of their jobs, in providing leadership experience, in learning about job opportunities in agriculture and in making managerial decisions.²⁰

III. RELATED LITERATURE

Farrar pointed out that even before The National Future Farmer came into existence there were details published concerning what the magazine ought to be.

Future Farmers wanted a magazine that would reach all the members with worthwhile and inspirational information; they wanted the good ideas of farming and FFA activities that might hatch in a single chapter to be spread throughout the country. Furthermore, they wanted the kind of magazine they would be proud to show their friends and that would serve as a good public relations medium for showing people outside the program what the FFA is and what its members are doing.²¹

A set of objectives for The National Future Farmer were developed after the magazine was established:

To strengthen the aims and purposes of the Future Farmers of America by bringing to our readers living examples of how these are being fulfilled daily by individual FFA members.

To show farm youth there is a future in farming and the broader field of Agriculture; that a young man can get established in farming today or use his rich farm background in other agricultural occupations.

²⁰Gale J. Leimbach, "A Study of Vocational Agriculture for Students from Urban Homes," (Unpublished Master's Thesis, The Ohio State University, 1964), Cited in Summaries of Studies in Agricultural Education 1963-1965, (Danville, Illinois: The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc., 1968), p. 75.

²¹John Farrar, FFA at 25, (Alexandria, Virginia: Future Farmers Supply Service, 1956), p. 54.

To inspire Future Farmers in the areas of farming, agricultural leadership, education and wholesome recreation.

To promote the democratic principles upon which this Country was founded and the acceptance of the responsibility of useful citizenship during youth.

To inform Future Farmers of the newest developments in Agriculture which will assist them in becoming the successful farmers of tomorrow.

To encourage the development of good reading habits by Future Farmers.

To contribute to better public relations for the Future Farmers of America and all of Agriculture.²²

The editorial purpose was described as "written for Future Farmers and dedicated to serving their vocational, education and recreational interest." The editorial formula prescribed consisted of approximately 50 per cent of the stories about the FFA; 25 per cent of the articles on technical agriculture, and 25 per cent features of general interest to farm youth.²³

The interests of FFA members in The National Future Farmer are periodically evaluated. It was with that purpose in mind that a staff meeting was called in mid-December, 1968. With information concerning readership studies, personal suggestions and letters from members, the staff spent considerable time on the question: What do readers want

²²The National Future Farmer, "Statement of Editorial Character and Objectives," (Alexandria, Virginia: Future Farmers of America), p. 1.

²³Ibid.

editorially?²⁴

It concluded:

We agreed that you want a magazine that brings you news, information and entertainment.

News about FFA and agriculture. What's going on in your organization at the local, state and national levels? What are individual members doing? What's new in agriculture?

Information about agriculture, including articles about crop and livestock production, management, careers, recreation, and related subjects. Information that will help you get started in farming or find a career in agriculture. Information about FFA that will help your chapter become a better chapter and information that will help you become a better FFA member, a better student and a better citizen.

Entertainment, yes, we believe you want to smile occasionally as you read your national magazine. That is the reason for the jokes and cartoons. In fact, you must agree, because you have consistently given the joke page the highest readership score of any page in every issue studied to date.²⁵

The National Magazine Committee has met at the Annual Convention each year to offer its recommendations for consideration.

Feedback from the 1958 Committee was:

We wish to commend the staff for their improvements of the magazine in having more and better articles, and a larger circulation.

The Editor, Board of Student Officers and Board of Directors are to be given full authority to make any

²⁴Wilson Carnes, "Word with the Editor," The National Future Farmer, (February-March, 1969), p. 14.

²⁵Ibid.

and all changes seemed necessary and advisable for the betterment of the magazine.²⁶

In 1965 the Magazine Committee recommended:

Suggest the continued use of articles by or about the national officers to better acquaint local chapter members with the national scope of our organization and its officers.

We recommend that the magazine staff consider a feature section in each issue based upon a theme and encourage chapters to submit advance articles and pictures in the suggested areas.

We commend members of the magazine staff for articles that have been published along the line of state and local leadership training and of agricultural related occupations.²⁷

The Magazine Committee of 1966 recommended the following for consideration:

Encourage members, advisors and parents to write letters to the editor giving personal views on the magazine and/or suggestions for improvement.

Encourage the magazine to use its resources to properly portray the image of agriculture in America today.

Encourage broader use of pre-convention and post-convention articles in appropriate issues.²⁸

²⁶Future Farmers of America, 1958 Proceeding of the 31st Annual Convention of the Future Farmers of America, (Washington, D.C.: Future Farmers of America, 1958), p. 33.

²⁷Future Farmers of America, 1965 Proceedings of the 38th Annual Convention of the Future Farmers of America, (Washington, D.C.: Future Farmers of America, 1965), p. 85.

²⁸Future Farmers of America, 1966 Proceedings of the 39th Annual Convention of the Future Farmers of America, (Washington, D.C.: Future Farmers of America, 1966), p. 74.

IV. RELATED RESEARCH

The writer could not locate any research that was identical to that conducted in this study. To the best of his knowledge, none had been conducted. However, there had been some related studies which contributed to the development of this particular study.

Reader interest surveys have been made by The National Future Farmer. Readex, Inc. was employed to make the studies. The research indicated the per cent of readers that were interested in each editorial item.

Readex measures interest-not observation-Readers report items they remember as special interest-not everything they remember they saw or looked at. Like boys who look at every girl on a dance floor but ask only certain ones to dance, readers look at most of the items on most of the pages but stop to read thoroughly only those which appear to be of particular interest to them. Readex does not define nor attempt to interpret the meaning of 'Interest' for individual readers. Readex has evidence only that it successfully measures relative interest in each of the various items for all readers of a publication as a total group.²⁹

The initial study in 1964 revealed the following interest ratings for each article and department in the April-May issue:

Reader Interest Report

Interest	Page	Title
48%	6	"Your Editors Say"
61%	8	"Looking Ahead"

²⁹Readex, Inc., Reader Interest Summary, Readex Report No. 54-1, (St. Paul, Minn.: Readex, Inc., 1964), p. 1.

Interest	Page	Title
50%	10	"From the Mailbag"
49%	12	"Here by the Owl"
43%	14	"News"
50%	18	"Agriculture U.S.A."
63%	20	"Maple-Flavored Profits"
69%	22	"Selecting a Used Pickup"
61%	23	"Farming through College"
53%	24	"FFA Goodwill Tour"
61%	26	"Plants that Kill"
58%	27	"Danger! Slow-Moving Vehicle"
45%	28	"Sugarcane Chapter"
30%	29	"FFA Reporters in Training"
68%	30	"Try these Shop Projects"
44%	31	"Helping Combat Cholera"
51%	32	"A Loan Repaid"
60%	33	"Dairy Bulls for Beef?"
45%	36	"Roadside Marketing"
68%	40	"The FFA in Action"
60%	42	"Bull Run Hare Chase," (Fiction)
58%	46	"Photo Round-Up"
53%	48	"Paul Lost Before Winning"
60%	50	"History of the Breed"
60%	52	"Trout go for Worms"
32%	57	"Free for You"
25%	58	"Easter Lilies from Parkside"
58%	60	"Something New"
65%	61	"Sportrait"
77%	62	"Joke Page"

The reader interest summary of the October-November, 1967 issue indicated the following results:

Reader Interest Report

Interest	Page	Title
57%	8	"Looking Ahead"
27%	10	"Word with the Editor"
61%	12	"From the Mailbag"
59%	17	"Living to Serve"
62%	22	"Farming with a Fine Point"
48%	23	"Looking for Thrills?"
54%	24	"A National Home for FFA"
85%	26	"Star Farmers of America"
61%	30	"The Farm Shop Feature"
63%	35	"The Chapter Scoop"

³⁰Ibid., p. 2.

Interest	Page	Title
60%	37	"Cures for Power Loss"
51%	38	"Photo Roundup"
58%	40	"Blueprint for the Future"
71%	44	"The All-Purpose Shotgun"
47%	50	"A Hand Extended"
46%	54	"Something New"
72%	56	"A New Look at Judging"
61%	58	"Sportrait"
30%	59	"Free for You"
53%	60	"The FFA in Action"
83%	62	"Joke Page" ³¹

Berstein found in a study of adolescent reading interests and comprehension of matter read that:

Interest has a real relationship to comprehension in reading. It not only makes reading a pleasure, but operates effectively to enhance reading efficiency.³²

V. SUMMARY

Literature and research has been surveyed in this chapter which laid the foundation for the research undertaken. After the literature had been reviewed it was evident to this writer that the readers of The National Future Farmer and their occupational goals had changed in the last six years and that the Vocational Education Act of 1963 activated these changes.

³¹Readex, Inc., Reader Interest Summary, Readex Report No. 54-8, (St. Paul, Minnesota: Readex, Inc., 1967), p. 2.

³²Berstein, M. R., "Relationship between Interest and Reading Comprehension." (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, April, 1953), cited by George R. Klare, The Measurement of Readability, (Ames: The Iowa State Press, 1963), p. 193.

Throughout its history The National Future Farmer has strived to better meet the needs of its readers. Although continual evaluation of the magazine was made through reader surveys and interest summaries, this writer believed that an attempt should be made to compare the interest of readers with different occupational goals.

It was assumed that different interests could be possessed by individuals with unlike occupational goals. The writer, therefore, decided to investigate whether FFA members with different occupational goals would have a different rate of interest in selected areas of The National Future Farmer.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

I. METHOD

This study was designed to determine whether there was a difference in the levels of interest in selected portions of the editorial content in The National Future Farmer as stated by FFA members who expressed the different occupational goals of: (1) farming or ranching, (2) ag-related occupations, and (3) nonagricultural occupations.

Following a study of the editorial content in The National Future Farmer an opinionnaire was constructed. The opinionnaire permitted the students to designate their occupational goals and rate their degree of interest in fifteen areas which comprised the types of articles and the regular departments found in The National Future Farmer. Five cells followed each item on the opinionnaire which allowed the respondents to check their level of interest as: excellent, good, average, fair, or poor.

The tentative survey instrument was critiqued by a panel of specialists in agricultural education.¹ Changes were made on the opinionnaire in accordance with their valuable suggestions.

¹See Appendix A.

II. POPULATION

The writer believed that students of vocational agriculture, who were FFA members in chapters within a forty-mile radius of Manhattan, Kansas, would represent a population with a wide range of occupational goals. The area represented diverse types of agriculture (grasslands, uphill diversified farming and bottomland crops farming) and different agricultural occupations possibilities (agricultural supplies businesses and services).

The sixteen vocational agriculture departments within the forty-mile radius were, therefore, selected for the population of the study. The writer decided that a random sample of eight, or 50 per cent of the departments in the population would provide sufficient data to meet the objectives established for this study. The writer put the sixteen department names in a bowl so all sixteen would have an equal opportunity to be selected and drew out eight which comprised the sample group for the study.

The eight vocational agriculture departments randomly selected were: Alma, Clay Center, Council Grove, Frankfort, Riley County, Rossville, Wamego, and Westmoreland. The writer placed a telephone call to each of the vocational agriculture instructors to ask for their cooperation and assistance in the research project. All teachers indicated support.

The writer personally delivered the instruments to the

vocational agriculture instructors of the selected departments on March 30 and 31, 1969, and instructed the teachers how to administer the instrument.² The survey was given to all vocational agriculture students who were FFA members. FFA members who were absent from their class on the day the instrument was administered were not included in the study. No attempt was made to obtain the absentees' expressed degree of interest in the magazine. The completed instruments were collected by the writer on April 1, 2 and 3, 1969.

III. MEASUREMENT

The responses were grouped according to the expressed occupational goals of the FFA members: farming and ranching, agricultural occupations, and nonagricultural occupations. The three groups will hereafter be referred to as sample groups.

Frequencies were tabulated for the three sample groups on all fifteen items on the opinionnaire. Participants who gave no response or multiple responses to an item were included in the frequency count and listed in the unusable column.

Percentages were computed for each frequency cell to determine what part of the sampling group contributed to that response. The six possible responses were: unusable, poor, fair, average, good, and excellent.

²See Appendix B.

Chi square was the statistical analysis method chosen to determine whether there was a significant difference in the expressed degree of interest among the three sample groups in relation to selected editorial content in The National Future Farmer. The expected frequency was established and the observed frequency recorded by an IBM computer. The formula for chi square is:³

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum(o - e)^2}{e}$$

o = the observed or obtained frequencies in the various categories

e = corresponding frequencies expected under some hypothesis.

To ascertain the significance of the chi-square value the degrees of freedom were determined by the use of the following formula:⁴

$$df = (c - 1)(r - 1)$$

c = number of columns

r = number of rows.

All tables used in the study were three rows by six columns. Therefore, the degrees of freedom for each table was ten. The author chose to use the .05 level of significance for chi square which for ten degrees of freedom was 18.31.

³Henry E. Garrett, Elementary Statistics, (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1967), pp. 139-140.

⁴Ibid., p. 142.

CHAPTER IV

I. ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

This study was designed to determine whether a difference existed in the levels of interest in selected portions of the editorial content in The National Future Farmer as expressed by FFA members who stated the different occupational goals of (1) farming or ranching, (2) agricultural related occupations, and (3) nonagricultural occupations.

The null hypothesis stated that there was no significant difference in the level of interest in selected portions of the editorial content in The National Future Farmer among FFA members who stated their occupational goals as (1) farming or ranching, (2) agricultural related occupations, or (3) nonagricultural occupations.

An opinionnaire was constructed which permitted the FFA members to designate by a check mark their present occupational goal. The opinionnaire was set up to allow the participants to state their interest in each of the fifteen areas which comprised the types of articles and the regular departments found in The National Future Farmer. Five cells (excellent, good, average, fair, and poor) followed each item on the opinionnaire which allowed the members to check the level which most accurately reflected their interest in that item.

The instrument was delivered to the instructors of eight randomly selected vocational agriculture departments who administered the opinionnaire to the FFA members who were in class on the test day. No attempt was made to obtain interest ratings from absentees or to determine the number of absentees on the test day.

A total of 239 FFA members participated in the study. One hundred and four members or 43.5 per cent of the sample stated their occupational goal was to farm or ranch. Sixty seven members or 28.0 per cent wanted to enter agricultural related occupations. Sixty-eight members or 28.5 per cent of the sample hoped to enter nonagricultural occupations.

The opinionnaire was constructed so that the student could indicate his high school classification by placing a check in the appropriate box. Seventy-four respondents (31 per cent) classified themselves as freshmen, 69 (29 per cent) as sophomores, 58 (25 per cent) as juniors, and 37 (15 per cent) as seniors. One of the respondents did not state his high school classification.

Hereafter in Chapter IV those FFA members who expressed their occupational goal as farming and ranching shall be called Group I. The members who stated their occupational goal as agricultural related occupations shall be termed Group II. The FFA members who expressed their occupational goal as nonagricultural occupations shall hereafter be called Group III.

Frequencies were tabulated for the three sample groups on all fifteen items on the opinionnaire. Participants who gave no response or multiple responses to an item were included in the frequency count and listed in the unusable column.

Percentages were computed for each frequency cell to determine what part of the sampling group contributed to that response. The six possible responses were: Unusable, poor, fair, average, good, and excellent.

Chi square was the statistical analysis method chosen to determine whether the null hypothesis should be retained or rejected. The IBM computer utilized in this study computed the expected frequency for each sample group in each of the five possible responses (excellent, good, average, fair, and poor), unusable response, and a combined chi-square value for each item. If the combined chi-square value did not equal or surpass the .05 level of significance the null hypothesis was accepted.

The tables in this chapter include the observed frequencies, expected frequencies, row percentages, and the combined chi-square value.

II. DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS

FFA members were instructed on the opinionnaire to check the response that most accurately reflected their interest in selected items of the editorial content in The National

Future Farmer. The possible responses were poor, fair, average, good, and excellent. All participants in the study were informed before they received the instrument that if they could not remember a certain item listed on the opinionnaire most likely that particular item was not interesting to them. They were instructed to mark the degree of interest accordingly.

Agricultural Articles (Table I). The three sample groups did not differ significantly in their degrees of interest in those articles dealing with the production, management, marketing, etc., of livestock, poultry, crops and other agricultural products found in The National Future Farmer. The null hypothesis was substantiated in that the chi-square value was 13.51. This was less than the 18.31 which was required to have significance at the .05 level.

It was noted that 56.7 per cent of Group I rated their interest in agricultural articles as "good" and "excellent." In comparison 43.3 per cent of Group II and 39.7 per cent of Group III rated their interest in agricultural articles as "good" and "excellent."

The findings indicated a smaller range in the percentages of Group III contributing to the highest and lowest frequency; 5.9 per cent in the "poor" cell to 32.4 per cent in the "average" cell. Groups I and II showed a range of 6.7 per cent "poor" to 40.4 per cent "good" and 4.5 per cent "excellent" to 38.8 per cent "good", respectively.

TABLE I
LEVELS OF READER INTEREST IN AGRICULTURAL ARTICLES

		Unusable response	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Farm or ranch	Observed frequency	1.0	7.0	12.0	25.0	42.0	17.0
	Expected frequency	2.2	7.0	13.5	31.3	38.7	11.3
	Per cent	1.0	6.7	11.5	24.0	40.4	16.3
Ag. related occupations	Observed frequency	1.0	5.0	7.0	25.0	26.0	3.0
	Expected frequency	1.4	4.5	8.7	20.2	24.9	7.3
	Per cent	1.5	7.5	10.4	37.3	38.8	4.5
Non- agricultural occupations	Observed frequency	3.0	4.0	12.0	22.0	21.0	6.0
	Expected frequency	1.4	4.6	8.8	20.5	25.3	7.4
	Per cent	4.4	5.9	17.6	32.4	30.9	8.8
Total	Observed frequency	5.0	16.0	31.0	72.0	89.0	26.0
	Per cent	2.1	6.7	13.0	30.1	37.2	10.9

Combined chi-square value 13.51; .05 level of significance was 18.31.

Agricultural Mechanics Articles (Table II). There was no significant difference in the interest of articles having to do with the construction, repair, management, maintenance and operations of agricultural machinery and equipment among the three sample groups. The combined chi-square value of 12.41 indicated the null hypothesis should be retained.

A large percentage (61.2 per cent) of Group II rated their interest in Agricultural Mechanics articles as "good" and "excellent." Of Group I, 52.9 per cent rated their interest in this item as "good" and "excellent." An even 50 per cent of Group III rated their interest in the agricultural mechanics articles as "good" and "excellent."

As with item number one the range of percentages which indicated each sampling group's contribution to the five usable responses varied. The range was "poor" 4.8 per cent to 33.7 per cent "good" for Group I, 3.0 per cent "poor" to 52.2 per cent "good" for Group III.

Career Articles (Table III). The chi-square value of 11.14 indicated that there was no significant difference of the interest in career articles as expressed by the three sample groups.

It was observed in Group II that a larger per cent of its members expressed a higher degree of interest in the articles about opportunities, skills required, and educational levels required in various occupations. Of that group. 77.6 per cent stated their interest in career articles as "average," "good" or "excellent" while 62.5 per cent of Group I and 64.7

TABLE II
LEVELS OF READER INTEREST IN AGRICULTURAL MECHANICS ARTICLES

		Unusable response	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Farm or ranch	Observed frequency	3.0	5.0	15.0	26.0	35.0	20.0
	Expected frequency	2.6	5.7	14.4	24.8	40.5	16.1
	Per cent	2.9	4.8	14.4	25.0	33.7	19.2
Ag. related occupations	Observed frequency	0.0	2.0	8.0	16.0	35.0	6.0
	Expected frequency	1.7	3.6	9.3	16.0	26.1	10.4
	Per cent	0.0	3.0	11.9	23.9	52.2	9.0
Non- agricultural occupations	Observed frequency	3.0	6.0	10.0	15.0	23.0	11.0
	Expected frequency	1.7	3.7	9.4	16.2	26.5	10.5
	Per cent	4.4	8.8	14.7	22.1	33.8	16.2
Total	Observed frequency	6.0	13.0	33.0	57.0	93.0	37.0
	Per cent	2.5	5.4	13.8	23.8	38.9	15.5

Combined chi-square value 12.41; .05 level of significance was 18.31.

TABLE III
LEVELS OF READER INTEREST IN CAREER ARTICLES

		Unusable response	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Farm or ranch	Observed frequency	0.0	12.0	27.0	26.0	28.0	11.0
	Expected frequency	2.2	9.1	22.6	28.7	29.2	12.2
	Per cent	0.0	11.5	26.0	25.0	26.9	10.6
Ag. related occupations	Observed frequency	2.0	4.0	9.0	20.0	23.0	9.0
	Expected frequency	1.4	5.9	14.6	18.5	18.8	7.8
	Per cent	3.0	6.0	13.4	29.9	34.3	13.4
Non- agricultural occupations	Observed frequency	3.0	5.0	16.0	20.0	16.0	8.0
	Expected frequency	1.4	6.0	14.8	18.8	19.1	8.0
	Per cent	4.4	7.4	23.5	29.4	23.5	11.8
Total	Observed frequency	5.0	21.0	52.0	66.0	67.0	28.0
	Per cent	2.1	8.8	21.8	27.6	28.0	11.7

Combined chi-square value 11.14; .05 level of significance was 18.31.

per cent of Group III rated their interest as "average," "good," or "excellent."

It was noted that in Group II 6 per cent rated career articles as "poor" and 34.3 per cent rated them as "good." This represented the largest range between the low and high frequency. The second largest range, found in Group III, was 7.4 per cent "poor" and 29.4 per cent "average." The table indicated that the range for Group I was 10.6 per cent in the "excellent" cell to 26.9 per cent in the "good" cell.

FFA Articles (Table IV). FFA members in the three sample groups did not significantly differ in their expressed interest in articles about activities or achievements of the National FFA Organization, State FFA Associations, and local FFA chapters or their members. The combined chi-square value of 7.24 would be significant at approximately the .70 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Table IV indicated that the largest frequency percentage for each of the three sample groups was found under the "good" column. The second largest frequency for all three groups was located in the "average" column.

Recreational Articles (Table V). The null hypothesis that no significant difference in the expressed interest of articles about recommended procedures and safety of hunting, fishing and other outdoor sports and recreational activities existed between the three sample groups was substantiated by the combined chi-square value of 5.53.

TABLE IV
LEVELS OF READER INTEREST IN FFA ARTICLES

		Unusable response	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Farm or ranch	Observed frequency	2.0	8.0	23.0	29.0	30.0	12.0
	Expected frequency	3.0	10.4	20.9	27.8	30.5	11.3
	Per cent	1.9	7.7	22.1	27.9	28.8	11.5
Ag. related occupations	Observed frequency	2.0	7.0	9.0	19.0	20.0	10.0
	Expected frequency	2.0	6.7	13.5	17.9	19.6	7.3
	Per cent	3.0	10.4	13.4	28.4	29.9	14.9
Non- agricultural occupations	Observed frequency	3.0	9.0	16.0	16.0	20.0	4.0
	Expected frequency	2.0	6.8	13.7	18.2	19.9	7.4
	Per cent	4.4	13.2	23.5	23.5	29.4	5.9
Total	Observed frequency	7.0	24.0	48.0	64.0	70.0	26.0
	Per cent	2.9	10.0	20.1	26.8	29.3	10.9

Combined chi-square value 7.24; .05 level of significance was 18.31.

TABLE V
LEVELS OF READER INTEREST IN RECREATIONAL ARTICLES

		Unusable response	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Farm or ranch	Observed frequency	2.0	9.0	25.0	23.0	32.0	13.0
	Expected frequency	3.0	10.0	24.4	26.5	27.8	12.2
	Per cent	1.9	8.7	24.0	22.1	30.8	12.5
Ag. related occupations	Observed frequency	2.0	5.0	15.0	21.0	15.0	9.0
	Expected frequency	2.0	6.4	15.7	17.1	17.9	7.8
	Per cent	3.0	7.5	22.4	31.3	22.4	13.4
Non- agricultural occupations	Observed frequency	3.0	9.0	16.0	17.0	17.0	6.0
	Expected frequency	2.0	6.5	15.9	17.4	18.2	8.0
	Per cent	4.4	13.2	23.5	25.0	25.0	8.8
Total	Observed frequency	7.0	23.0	56.0	61.0	64.0	28.0
	Per cent	2.9	9.6	23.4	25.5	26.8	11.7

Combined chi-square value 5.53; .05 level of significance was 18.31.

"Chapter Scoop" (Table VI). The combined chi-square value of 11.68 verifies that the null hypothesis was supported. There was no significant difference in the levels of interest among the three sample groups concerning the editorial department that presents news items about local FFA chapter happenings and member accomplishments.

It was noted that Group III exhibited the largest range between the percentages of its members in the high and low frequency cells. Of the total group, 4.4 per cent indicated their interest as "excellent" and 33.8 per cent as "average." The second largest range (7.5 per cent "excellent" and 35.8 per cent "average") was located in Group II. The range for Group I was 8.7 per cent in the "excellent" cell to 26.9 per cent in the "good" cell.

A higher per cent of Group I was observed to have a higher degree of interest in "Chapter Scoop." Of that group 35.6 per cent indicated their interest as "good" or "excellent" which compared with 29.9 per cent of the members in Group II and 19.1 per cent in Group III.

"FFA in Action" (Table VII). The null hypothesis that no significant difference existed in the expressed degrees of interest in the department "FFA in Action" among the three sample groups was substantiated by the combined chi-square value of 10.51.

A larger per cent of Group I indicated a higher degree of interest in the editorial department which presents local chapters with activity ideas which have been developed and

TABLE VI
LEVELS OF READER INTEREST IN "CHAPTER SCOOP"

		Unusable response	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Farm or ranch	Observed frequency	3.0	18.0	24.0	22.0	28.0	9.0
	Expected frequency	4.4	16.1	23.1	30.0	23.1	7.4
	Per cent	2.9	17.3	23.1	21.2	26.9	8.7
Ag. related occupations	Observed frequency	3.0	10.0	10.0	24.0	15.0	5.0
	Expected frequency	2.8	10.4	14.9	19.3	14.9	4.8
	Per cent	4.5	14.9	14.9	35.8	22.4	7.5
Non- agricultural occupations	Observed frequency	4.0	9.0	19.0	23.0	10.0	3.0
	Expected frequency	2.8	10.5	15.1	19.6	15.1	4.8
	Per cent	5.9	13.2	27.9	33.8	14.7	4.4
Total	Observed frequency	10.0	37.0	53.0	69.0	53.0	17.0
	Per cent	4.2	15.5	22.2	28.9	22.2	7.1

Combined chi-square value 11.68; .05 level of significance was 18.31.

TABLE VII
LEVELS OF READER INTEREST IN "FFA IN ACTION"

			Unusable response	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Farm or ranch	Observed frequency		2.0	11.0	20.0	20.0	35.0	16.0
	Expected frequency		3.5	11.7	17.8	25.7	33.1	12.2
	Per cent		1.9	10.6	19.2	19.2	33.7	15.4
Ag. related occupations	Observed frequency		3.0	9.0	6.0	21.0	21.0	7.0
	Expected frequency		2.2	7.6	11.5	16.5	21.3	7.8
	Per cent		4.5	13.4	9.0	31.3	31.3	10.4
Non- agricultural occupations	Observed frequency		3.0	7.0	15.0	18.0	20.0	5.0
	Expected frequency		2.3	7.7	11.7	16.8	21.6	8.0
	Per cent		4.4	10.3	22.1	26.5	29.4	7.4
Total	Observed frequency		8.0	27.0	41.0	59.0	76.0	28.0
	Per cent		3.3	11.3	17.2	24.7	31.8	11.7

Combined chi-square value 10.51; .05 level of significance was 18.31.

used in other chapters throughout the United States and State Association News. Of the members in that group 49.1 per cent expressed their degree of interest as "good" or "excellent." An interest rating of "good" or "excellent" was indicated by 41.7 per cent of Group II and 36.8 per cent of Group III.

"Free for You" (Table VIII). No significant differences of expressed interest by the three sample groups were found in regard to the "Free for You" department. The combined chi-square value was 8.96.

It was observed that a larger per cent of Groups II and III indicated a higher degree of interest in the department which presents a brief description of available vocational, educational, and recreational materials that are free to FFA members who request them. Of those two groups, 64.2 per cent of Group II and 63.2 per cent of Group III indicated their degree of interest in "Free for You" as "Average," "good" or "excellent." This compared with 55.9 per cent of Group I in the "average", "good", or "excellent." This compared with 55.9 per cent of Group I in the "average", "good", and "excellent" cells.

Group II showed the largest range between the percentages of its members in the high and low frequencies (4.5 per cent, "excellent"; 35.8 per cent "average"). The degrees of interest exhibited by Group III ranged from 10.3 per cent as "poor" to 33.8 per cent "average." Group I interest ranged from 8.7 per cent of its members expressing their interest as "excellent" to 29.8 per cent "fair."

TABLE VIII
LEVELS OF READER INTEREST IN "FREE FOR YOU"

		Unusable response	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Farm or ranch	Observed frequency	0.0	15.0	31.0	27.0	22.0	9.0
	Expected frequency	1.3	12.6	27.4	32.2	21.8	8.7
	Per cent	0.0	14.4	29.8	26.0	21.2	8.7
Ag. related occupations	Observed frequency	2.0	7.0	15.0	24.0	16.0	3.0
	Expected frequency	0.8	8.1	17.7	20.7	14.0	5.6
	Per cent	3.0	10.4	22.4	35.8	23.9	4.5
Non- agricultural occupations	Observed frequency	1.0	7.0	17.0	23.0	12.0	8.0
	Expected frequency	0.9	8.3	17.9	21.1	14.2	5.7
	Per cent	1.5	10.3	25.0	33.8	17.6	11.8
Total	Observed frequency	3.0	29.0	63.0	74.0	50.0	20.0
	Per cent	1.3	12.1	26.4	31.0	20.9	8.4

Combined chi-square value 8.96; .05 level of significance was 18.31.

"From the Mailbag" (Table IX). The null hypothesis was supported by the combined chi-square value of 9.13. There was no significant difference in the degree of interest expressed by the three sample groups in that department which presented letters from The National Future Farmer readers and editor's comments in regard to certain questions posed by the readers.

A larger percentage (31.4) of Group II rated their interest in "From the Mailbag" as "good" or "excellent." This compared with 27.9 per cent of Group I and 17.6 per cent of Group III that stated "good" or "excellent" interest in that department.

It was noted that the largest frequency percentagewise for each of the three sample groups was found in the "average" column. The largest range between the percentages of the group found in the high and low frequency was located in Group III (2.9 per cent "excellent" to 42.6 per cent "average"). The range in Group II was 7.5 per cent with an expressed "poor" or an "excellent" interest to 37.3 per cent of the group in the "average" cell. Group I stated its interest as 5.8 per cent "excellent" and 32.7 per cent "average" in "From the Mailbag" department.

"Have You Heard the One About" (Table X). No significant difference was found to occur in the expressed interest of Groups I, II, and III in the joke page. The chi-square table indicated that the combined chi-square value of 7.70 did not meet our standard of the .05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

TABLE IX
LEVELS OF READER INTEREST IN "FROM THE MAILBAG"

		Unusable response	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Farm or ranch	Observed frequency	0.0	14.0	27.0	34.0	23.0	6.0
	Expected frequency	1.3	12.6	24.8	38.3	21.3	5.7
	Per cent	0.0	13.5	26.0	32.7	22.1	5.8
Ag. related occupations	Observed frequency	2.0	5.0	14.0	25.0	16.0	5.0
	Expected frequency	0.8	8.1	16.0	24.7	13.7	3.6
	Per cent	3.0	7.5	20.9	37.3	23.9	7.5
Non- agricultural occupations	Observed frequency	1.0	10.0	16.0	29.0	10.0	2.0
	Expected frequency	0.9	8.3	16.2	25.0	13.9	3.7
	Per cent	1.5	14.7	23.5	42.6	14.7	2.9
Total	Observed frequency	3.0	29.0	57.0	88.0	49.0	13.0
	Per cent	1.3	12.1	23.8	36.8	20.5	5.4

Combined chi-square value 9.13; .05 level of significance was 18.31.

TABLE X

LEVELS OF READER INTEREST IN "HAVE YOU HEARD THE ONE ABOUT"

		Unusable response				Average	Good	Excellent
		Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent		
Farm or ranch	Observed frequency	0.0	9.0	13.0	24.0	31.0	27.0	
	Expected frequency	0.9	8.3	13.5	21.3	31.8	28.3	
	Per cent	0.0	8.7	12.5	23.1	29.8	26.0	
Ag. related occupations	Observed frequency	1.0	2.0	8.0	11.0	23.0	22.0	
	Expected frequency	0.6	5.3	8.7	13.7	20.5	18.2	
	Per cent	1.5	3.0	11.9	16.4	34.3	32.8	
Non- agricultural occupations	Observed frequency	1.0	8.0	10.0	14.0	19.0	16.0	
	Expected frequency	0.6	5.4	8.8	13.9	20.8	18.5	
	Per cent	1.5	11.8	14.7	20.6	27.9	23.5	
Total	Observed frequency	2.0	19.0	31.0	49.0	73.0	65.0	
	Per cent	0.8	7.9	13.0	20.5	30.5	27.2	

Combined chi-square value 7.70; .05 level of significance was 18.31.

Group II expressed a higher degree of interest in the joke page as 67.1 per cent of its members rated their interest as "good" or "excellent." This compared with 60.1 per cent of Group I and 51.4 per cent of Group III in the "good" or "excellent" cells.

Each of the three groups had their high frequency in the "good" column, second high in the "excellent" column, third high in the "average", fourth largest in the "fair", and the smallest frequency in the "poor" column. The ranges varied between the percentages of the groups that were found in the high and low frequencies. The range was 3.0 per cent to 34.3 per cent in Group II, 8.3 per cent to 31.8 per cent for Group I, and 11.8 per cent to 27.9 per cent for Group III.

"Looking Ahead" (Table XI). The combined chi-square value 7.95 substantiated the null hypothesis that there was no significant difference in the expressed interest of the three groups in the department which presents new developments in the areas of livestock, crops, and machinery.

A larger percentage (43.3) of Group I rated their interest in "Looking Ahead" as "good" or "excellent." This compared with 40.3 per cent of Group II and 33.8 per cent of Group III that stated their interest as "good" or "excellent" in that department.

The largest frequencies percentagewise for Groups II and III were located in the "average" column while Group I's largest frequency was in the "good" cell. The smallest frequency for each of the three groups was found in the "poor" column.

TABLE XI
LEVELS OF READER INTEREST IN "LOOKING AHEAD"

		Unusable response	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Farm or ranch	Observed frequency	1.0	7.0	21.0	30.0	31.0	14.0
	Expected frequency	2.6	6.5	20.5	33.1	28.7	12.6
	Per cent	1.0	6.7	20.2	28.8	29.8	13.5
Ag. related occupations	Observed frequency	3.0	4.0	8.0	25.0	18.0	9.0
	Expected frequency	1.7	4.2	13.2	21.3	18.5	8.1
	Per cent	4.5	6.0	11.9	37.3	26.9	13.4
Non- agricultural occupations	Observed frequency	2.0	4.0	18.0	21.0	17.0	6.0
	Expected frequency	1.7	4.3	13.4	21.6	18.8	8.3
	Per cent	2.9	5.9	26.5	30.9	25.0	8.8
Total	Observed frequency	6.0	15.0	47.0	76.0	66.0	29.0
	Per cent	2.5	6.3	19.7	31.8	27.6	12.1

Combined chi-square value 7.95; .05 level of significance was 18.31.

"Photo Round-Up" (Table XII). No significant difference was found to exist in the expressed interest of Groups I, II, and III in the "Photo Round-Up" page. The combined chi-square value of 11.42 did not equal or exceed the required 18.31 previously established for significance at the .05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Larger percentages of Groups I and II were observed expressing a higher degree of interest in the page devoted to showing FFA members what other FFA members are doing via pictures. Of the two groups, 69.3 per cent of Group I and 68.7 per cent of Group II indicated their interest as "good", "average", or "excellent." This compared with a 57.3 per cent of Group III in the "good", "average", or "excellent" cells.

The smallest range between the percentages of the group in the highest and lowest frequency was found to exist in Group I. That group's range was 10.6 per cent in the "poor" cell and 27.9 per cent in each of the cells, "average" and "good." This compared with 7.5 per cent of Group II in the "poor" cell to 35.8 per cent in the "average" cell, and 2.9 per cent of Group III in the "excellent" cell to 30.9 per cent in the "average" cell.

"Something New" (Table XIII). The null hypothesis that no significant difference existed in the degree of interest expressed by members in Groups I, II, and III in the department illustrating and describing new products available

TABLE XII
LEVELS OF READER INTEREST IN "PHOTO ROUND-UP"

		Unusable response	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Farm or ranch	Observed frequency	0.0	11.0	21.0	29.0	29.0	14.0
	Expected frequency	1.7	10.0	23.9	32.2	26.5	9.6
	Per cent	0.0	10.6	20.2	27.9	27.9	13.5
Ag. related occupations	Observed frequency	2.0	5.0	14.0	24.0	16.0	6.0
	Expected frequency	1.1	6.4	15.4	20.7	17.1	6.2
	Per cent	3.0	7.5	20.9	35.8	23.9	9.0
Non- agricultural occupations	Observed frequency	2.0	7.0	20.0	21.0	16.0	2.0
	Expected frequency	1.1	6.5	15.6	21.1	17.4	6.3
	Per cent	2.9	10.3	29.4	30.9	23.5	2.9
Total	Observed frequency	4.0	23.0	55.0	74.0	61.0	22.0
	Per cent	1.7	9.6	23.0	31.0	25.5	9.2

Combined chi-square value 11.42; .05 level of significance was 18.31.

TABLE XIII
LEVELS OF READER INTEREST IN "SOMETHING NEW"

		Unusable response	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Farm or ranch	Observed frequency	2.0	10.0	20.0	30.0	28.0	14.0
	Expected frequency	3.5	9.1	21.8	28.3	29.6	11.7
	Per cent	1.9	9.6	19.2	28.8	26.9	13.5
Ag. related occupations	Observed frequency	3.0	6.0	14.0	19.0	18.0	7.0
	Expected frequency	2.2	5.9	14.0	18.2	19.1	7.6
	Per cent	4.5	9.0	20.9	28.4	26.9	10.4
Non- agricultural occupations	Observed frequency	3.0	5.0	16.0	16.0	22.0	6.0
	Expected frequency	2.3	6.0	14.2	18.5	19.3	7.7
	Per cent	4.4	7.4	23.5	23.5	32.4	8.8
Total	Observed frequency	8.0	21.0	50.0	65.0	68.0	27.0
	Per cent	3.3	8.8	20.9	27.2	28.5	11.3

Combined chi-square value 3.55; .05 level of significance was 18.31.

for agricultural and recreational use. The combined chi-square value was 3.55.

It was noted that the largest frequency for Group III was found in the "good" cell. The largest frequencies for Groups I and II were located under the "average" cell.

"Sportrait" (Table XIV). No significant difference was found among the three groups regarding their interest in that department which presents the history and accomplishments of well-known athletes. The null hypothesis was substantiated by a combined chi-square value of 9.27.

A majority of the members in Group II and Group III rated their interest in "Sportrait" as "good" and "excellent." This compared with 50.0 per cent for Group I in the "good" and "excellent" cells. The largest frequencies for each of the three groups were found in the "good" column. The smallest frequencies for all three groups were located in the "poor" column.

"Word with the Editor" (Table XV). The null hypothesis that no significant difference existed in the degree of interest expressed by the three groups in "Word with the Editor" was supported by the combined chi-square value of 10.46.

Larger percentages of Groups I and II were observed expressing a higher degree of interest in that department devoted to presenting various items of interest to FFA members. Of the two groups, 59.9 per cent of Group I and 56.8 per cent of Group II indicated their interest as "good",

TABLE XIV
LEVELS OF READER INTEREST IN "SPORTRAIT"

		Unusable response	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Farm or ranch	Observed frequency	0.0	12.0	21.0	19.0	32.0	20.0
	Expected frequency	2.6	8.7	19.6	20.9	32.6	19.6
	Per cent	0.0	11.5	20.2	18.3	30.8	19.2
Ag. related occupations	Observed frequency	2.0	3.0	12.0	16.0	21.0	13.0
	Expected frequency	1.7	5.6	12.6	13.5	21.0	12.6
	Per cent	3.0	4.5	17.9	23.9	31.3	19.4
Non- agricultural occupations	Observed frequency	4.0	5.0	12.0	13.0	22.0	12.0
	Expected frequency	1.7	5.7	12.8	13.7	21.3	12.8
	Per cent	5.9	7.4	17.6	19.1	32.4	17.6
Total	Observed frequency	6.0	20.0	45.0	48.0	75.0	45.0
	Per cent	2.5	8.4	18.8	20.1	31.4	18.8

Combined chi-square value 9.27; .05 level of significance was 18.31.

TABLE XV
LEVELS OF READER INTEREST IN "WORD WITH THE EDITOR"

		Unusable response							
		Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent			
Farm or ranch	Observed frequency	1.0	25.0	26.0	33.0	15.0	4.0		
	Expected frequency	2.2	20.5	29.2	30.9	18.3	3.0		
	Per cent	1.0	24.0	25.0	31.7	14.4	3.8		
Ag. related occupations	Observed frequency	3.0	10.0	16.0	20.0	16.0	2.0		
	Expected frequency	1.4	13.2	18.8	19.9	11.8	2.0		
	Per cent	4.5	14.9	23.9	29.9	23.9	3.0		
Non- agricultural occupations	Observed frequency	1.0	12.0	25.0	18.0	11.0	1.0		
	Expected frequency	1.4	13.4	19.1	20.2	11.9	2.0		
	Per cent	1.5	17.6	36.8	26.5	16.2	1.5		
Total	Observed frequency	5.0	47.0	67.0	71.0	42.0	7.0		
	Per cent	2.1	19.7	28.0	29.7	17.6	2.9		

Combined chi-square value 10.46; .05 level of significance was 18.31.

"average" or "excellent." This compared with 44.2 per cent of Group III in the "good", "average" or "excellent" cells.

The widest range between the percentages of the group in the highest and lowest frequency was found to exist in Group III. That group's range was 1.5 per cent in the "excellent" cell to 36.8 per cent in the "fair" cell. This compared with 3.8 per cent of Group I in the "excellent" cell to 31.7 per cent in the "average" cell and 3.0 per cent of Group II in the "excellent" cell to 29.9 per cent in the "average" cell.

III. OTHER FINDINGS

Although the combined chi-square value in each of the fifteen tables substantiated the null hypothesis certain findings were noted by the investigator.

A majority of Group I expressed "good" or "excellent" interest in the agricultural articles, the agricultural mechanics articles and the joke page. In Group II, a majority of the members rated their interest "good" or "excellent" in the agricultural mechanics articles, the joke page, and the "Sportrait" department. A majority of Group III stated their interest as "good" or "excellent" in the joke page.

It was observed that a majority of Group III indicated a "poor" or "fair" interest in "Word with the Editor." No other majorities were noted in the "poor" and "fair" cells.

The high frequency found in Group I was 42 (40.4 per cent of the group) indicating a "good" interest in agricultural

articles. Group II's high frequency was 35 (52.2 per cent) who expressed a "good" interest in agricultural mechanics articles. The high frequency located in Group III was 29 (42.6 per cent of the group) stating an "average" interest in "From the Mailbag."

It was observed that Group I, as compared with Groups II and III, had a larger percentage of its members in the "good" and "excellent" cells on seven of the selected editorial items. The seven items were agricultural articles, recreational articles, "Chapter Scoop", "FFA in Action", "Free for You", "Looking Ahead," and "Photo Round-Up."

Compared with Groups I and III, Group II exhibited a larger per cent of its members in the "good" and "excellent" cells on seven of the selected items. They were agricultural mechanics articles, career articles, FFA articles, "From the Mailbag", "Have You Heard the One About", "Sportrait", and "Word with the Editor."

Group III, compared with Groups I and II, showed a larger per cent of its members in the "good" and "excellent" cells associated with "Something New."

It was noted that 57.7 per cent of Groups I, II, and III rated their interest in the joke page as "good" or "excellent." In two other instances a majority of the sample group expressed their interest as "good" or "excellent"; 54.4 per cent in agricultural articles and 50.2 per cent in "Sportrait."

Items rating a plurality, but not a majority, of the total samples "good" or "excellent" interest were: agricultural articles, 48.1 per cent; "FFA in Action", 43.5 per cent; FFA articles, 40.2 per cent; "Something New", 39.8 per cent; career articles and "Looking Ahead", 39.7 per cent; recreational articles, 38.5 per cent; and "Photo Round-Up", 34.7 per cent.

Editorial content which received less than a plurality of the sample's interest expressed as "good" or "excellent" were "Free for You" and "Chapter Scoop", 29.3 per cent; "From the Mailbag", 25.9 per cent; and "Word with the Editor", 20.5 per cent.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESIS, METHOD AND FINDINGS

The purposes of this study were (1) to determine the expressed levels of interests in selected editorial content of The National Future Farmer by Future Farmers of America who stated different occupational goals, and (2) to investigate whether there was a difference in the expressed levels of interest among FFA members who stated different occupational goals.

A null hypothesis was used to analyze the data collected in this study. The null hypothesis stated that there was no significant difference in the stated level of interest in selected editorial content of The National Future Farmer among FFA members whose expressed occupational goals were to enter (1) farming or ranching, (2) agricultural related occupations, or (3) nonagricultural occupations after completion of their formal education.

Following a study of the editorial content in The National Future Farmer an opinionnaire was constructed. The opinionnaire permitted the FFA members to designate their occupational goals and rate their degree of interest in

fifteen areas which comprised the types of articles and the regular departments found in The National Future Farmer. Five cells followed each item on the opinionnaire which allowed the respondents to check their level of interest as: excellent, good, average, fair, or poor.

The writer selected FFA members within a forty-mile radius of Manhattan, Kansas, as his population because he believed that group would represent a wide range of occupational goals. From the sixteen FFA chapters in that area, eight were randomly selected as the sample.

The writer personally delivered the opinionnaires to the vocational agriculture teachers and instructed them how to administer the instrument. The opinionnaire was administered by the vocational agriculture instructor to all vocational agriculture classes on the same day. FFA members who were absent from their class on the day the instrument was administered were not included in the study. The completed opinionnaires were collected by the writer.

A total of 239 FFA members participated in the study. The responses were grouped according to the expressed occupational goals of the FFA members: farming or ranching, Group I; agricultural related occupations, Group II; and nonagricultural occupations, Group III.

Frequencies were tabulated for the three sample groups on all fifteen items representing the types of articles and departments found in The National Future Farmer on the opinionnaire. Participants who gave no response or multiple

responses to an item were included in the frequency count and listed in a column designated "unusable."

Percentages were computed for each frequency cell to determine what part of the sampling group contributed to that response. The six possible responses were: unusable, poor, fair, average, good, and excellent.

Chi square was the statistical analysis method used to determine whether there was a significant difference in the expressed degree of interest among the three sample groups in relation to selected editorial content in The National Future Farmer. The expected frequency was established and the observed frequency recorded by an IBM computer.

The author chose to use the .05 level of significance for chi square to determine significant differences of interest. The chi-square value for ten degrees of freedom at the .05 level was 18.31. If the combined chi-square value for an item was equal to or greater than 18.31 the expressed degrees of interest would be termed significantly different.

Participants in the study indicated their degree of interest in each of the following fifteen items.

Agricultural Articles. The three sample groups did not differ significantly in their degrees of interest in those articles dealing with the production, management, marketing, etc., of livestock, poultry, crops, and other agricultural products found in The National Future Farmer. The null hypothesis was supported in that the chi-square value of 13.51. This was less than the 18.31 which was required to

have significance at the .05 level.

Agricultural Mechanics Articles. There was no significant difference in the interest of articles having to do with the construction, repair, management, maintenance and operations of agricultural machinery and equipment among the three sample groups. The combined chi-square value of 12.41 indicated the null hypothesis should be retained.

Career Articles. The chi-square value of 11.14 indicated that there was no significant difference of the interest in articles about the opportunities, skills required, and educational levels required in various occupations among the three sample groups.

FFA Articles. FFA members in the three sample groups did not significantly differ in their expressed interest in articles about activities or achievements of the National FFA Organization, State FFA Associations, and local FFA chapters or their members. The chi-square value of 7.24 substantiated the null hypothesis.

Recreational Articles. The null hypothesis that no significant difference in the expressed interest of articles about recommended procedures and safety of hunting, fishing and other outdoor sports, and recreational activities existed between the three sample groups was substantiated by the combined chi-square value of 5.53.

"Chapter Scoop." The combined chi-square value of 11.68 verifies that the null hypothesis should be retained. There was no significant difference in the levels of interest

among the three sample groups concerning the editorial department that presents news items about local FFA chapter happenings and member accomplishments.

"FFA in Action." No significant difference existed in the expressed degree of interest in the department which presents State Association News and ideas for FFA activities that have been developed and used in other chapters throughout the United States. The null hypothesis was substantiated by the combined chi-square value of 10.51.

"Free for You." No significant differences of expressed interest by the three sample groups were found in regard to the department which presents a brief description of available vocational, educational and recreational materials that are free to FFA members who request them. (Chi-square value 8.96.)

"From the Mailbag." The null hypothesis was supported by the combined chi-square value of 9.13. There was no significant difference in the degree of interest expressed by the three sample groups in that department which presented letters from The National Future Farmer readers and the editor's comments in regard to certain questions posed by the readers.

"Have You Heard the One About." No significant difference was found to occur in the expressed interest of Groups I, II, and III in the joke page. The chi-square table indicated that the combined chi-square value of 7.70 did not

meet our standard of the .05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

"Looking Ahead." The combined chi-square value 7.95 substantiated the null hypothesis that there was no significant difference in the expressed interest of the three groups in the department which presents new developments in the areas of livestock, crops, and machinery.

"Photo Round-Up." No significant difference was found to exist in the expressed interest of Groups I, II, and III in the page showing FFA members what other FFA members are doing via pictures. The combined chi-square value of 11.42 did not equal or exceed the required 18.31 previously established for significance at the .05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

"Something New." The null hypothesis that no significant difference existed in the degree of interest expressed by members in Groups I, II, and III in the department illustrating and describing new products available for agricultural and recreational use. (Chi-square value 3.55.)

"Sportrait." No significant difference was found among the three groups regarding their interest in that department which presents the history and accomplishments of well-known athletes. The null hypothesis was substantiated by a combined chi-square value of 9.27.

"Word with the Editor." The null hypothesis that no significant difference existed in the degree of interest expressed by the three groups in that department presenting

various items of interest to FFA members was supported by the combined chi-square value of 10.46.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The study considered only how FFA members who stated different occupational goals (farming or ranching, agricultural related occupations and nonagricultural occupations) expressed their degree of interest in the fifteen selected portions of editorial content. The author recognized that many variables entered into the results.

The following conclusions were established from a study of the data analyzed concerning FFA members within a forty-mile radius of Manhattan, Kansas, who stated different occupational goals.

The expressed levels of interest among FFA members do not significantly differ regarding the following editorial areas of The National Future Farmer:

- (a) agricultural articles
- (b) agricultural mechanics articles
- (c) career articles
- (d) FFA articles
- (e) recreational articles
- (f) "Chapter Scoop"
- (g) "FFA in Action"
- (h) "Free for You"
- (i) "From the Mailbag"
- (j) "Have You Heard the One About"
- (k) "Looking Ahead"
- (l) "Photo Round-Up"
- (m) "Something New"
- (n) "Sportrait"
- (o) "Word with the Editor".

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APPENDIX A

PANEL OF SPECIALISTS

A group of men in agricultural education who reviewed and gave valuable suggestions for improving the opinion-naire.

Dr. R. J. Agan
Head Teacher Educator
College of Education
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas

Dr. J. J. Albracht
Teacher Educator
College of Education
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas

Professor Earl Baugher
Teacher Educator
Agricultural Engineering
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas

Mr. Dean Prochaska
Vocational Agriculture Instructor
Manhattan High School
Manhattan, Kansas

Mr. Victor Osborn
Student teacher in Agricultural Education
Manhattan High School
Manhattan, Kansas

APPENDIX B

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING
THE INSTRUMENT

The following directions should be read to the class before the FFA members are given the opinionnaires.

- Item 1. Place a check mark or an X in the blank which represents the high school class in which you are a member.
- Item 2. Check only one.
- Item 3. If you are not familiar with an area or areas of editorial content in The National Future Farmer, most likely that area, was not interesting to you. Mark the appropriate response. Please check only one response on all items.

Definitions

Article. Any story that is not a regular portion of the magazine which is indicated by titles that do not reappear in consecutive issues. (Breaking the Entry Barrier is an exception and will be considered as an article.)

Agricultural Article. Those articles dealing with the production, management, marketing, etc., of livestock, poultry, crops, and other agricultural products.

Agricultural Mechanics Article. Those articles having to do with the construction, repair, management, maintenance and operations of agricultural machinery and equipment.

Career Article. Those articles having to do with the opportunities, skills required, and educational levels required in the various occupations.

Department. A regular section found in consecutive issues which are designated by the same title. (Breaking the Entry Barrier is an exception and will be considered as an article.)

FFA Article. Those articles concerned with activities or achievements of the National Organization, State Associations, and local chapters or their members.

Recreational Articles. Those articles dealing with the recommended procedures and safety of hunting, fishing, other outdoor sports, and recreational activities.

READER SURVEY

Please check the appropriate blank.

1. High school classification: Fr.____, So.____, Jr.____, Sr.____.
2. Which of the following occupations do you plan to enter after completion of your formal education?

Farming or ranching _____ Ag-related occupations _____
Non-agricultural occupations _____

Please rate the following items and check the response that most accurately reflects your opinion regarding the editorial content of The National Future Farmer.

3. The following areas are interesting:

- a. agricultural articles
- b. agricultural mechanics articles
- c. career articles
- d. FFA articles
- e. recreational articles
- f. Chapter Scoop
- g. FFA in Action
- h. Free for You
- i. From the Mailbag
- j. Have You Heard the One About
- k. Looking Ahead
- l. Photo Round-Up
- m. Something New
- n. Sportrait
- o. Word with the Editor

[illegible]

INTEREST IN THE NATIONAL FUTURE FARMER MAGAZINE
AS EXPRESSED BY FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA
WITH DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONAL GOALS

by

LAWRENCE H. ERPELDING, JR.

B. S., Kansas State University, 1965

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1969

The purposes of this study were (1) to determine the expressed levels of interests in selected editorial content of The National Future Farmer by Future Farmers of America who stated different occupational goals, and (2) to investigate whether there was a difference in the expressed levels of interest among FFA members who stated different occupational goals.

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The data for this study was obtained by use of an opinionnaire which was personally delivered and collected. The population consisted of FFA members who were students in the sixteen vocational agriculture departments located within a forty-mile radius of Manhattan, Kansas. Eight vocational agriculture departments were randomly selected and the FFA members who were students in those departments and were present on the day the instrument was administered comprised the sample.

Data from the sample of 239 FFA members were processed by use of an IBM computer which provided observed frequency,

expected frequency, per cent, and chi-square analysis. The .05 level of significance for chi square was used to determine significant differences of interest.

The study considered only how FFA members who stated different occupational goals (farming or ranching, agricultural related occupations, and nonagricultural occupations) expressed their degree of interest in the fifteen selected portions of editorial content. The author recognized that many variables enter into the results.

The following conclusions were established from a study of the data analyzed concerning FFA members within a forty-mile radius of Manhattan, Kansas, who stated different occupational goals.

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- (k) "Looking Ahead"
- (l) "Photo Round-Up"
- (m) "Something New"
- (n) "Sportrait"
- (o) "Word with the Editor".