

A COMPARISON OF THE RESPONSES OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE AND
NON-VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE STUDENTS AS TO FACTORS
INFLUENCING THEM TO BECOME FARMERS

by

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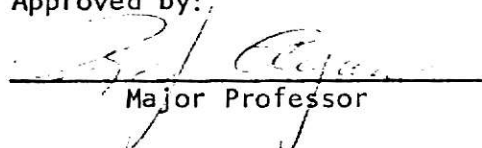
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

At the time of this study the author observed that the number of high school vocational agriculture graduates who entered the business of farming had decreased, while at the same time the need for a more highly trained farmer had steadily increased. The identification of the student, early, who has the capabilities of becoming a successful farmer and to encourage him to prepare for a career in farming was one of the most pressing problems of the vocational agriculture teacher. Studies had been carried out to determine why vocational agriculture students did not go into farming, but none had been conducted in recent years to determine the factors involved in a youth entering the business of farming. In this study the author attempted to identify the reasons why the farmers in the Frankfort and Vermillion communities entered into the business of farming.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to determine if the development of interest in farming was different for the vocational agriculture graduate and the non-vocational agriculture high school graduate; (2) to determine if any relationship existed between the type of training taken and

the entry into farming; (3) to determine if the method of entry into farming differed between vocational agriculture and non-vocational agriculture students.

Importance of the study. The farmer of today must be a highly trained technician in livestock production, crop production, soil management, machinery management, as well as a shrewd business man with a knowledge of sound business practices. Agriculture will, somehow, need to select, encourage, and train the most able youth that can be found to fill this need. Vocational agriculture teachers, in the past, have largely stressed training in production agriculture with the result that most graduates were prepared to enter the business of farming. The contemporary vocational agriculture department placed stress on training for the occupations related to the business of farming as well as on production agriculture. With less time devoted to production agriculture, it was especially important to identify the potential future farmer early in his high school career and counsel him into a training program for this demanding occupation. This study compared the graduates taking two or more years of vocational agriculture with graduates of a high school which did not offer a program of vocational agriculture. An attempt was made to identify the factors directly related to vocational agriculture, which encouraged and assisted the farmer to become established in the business of farming.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Vocational. The term vocational referred to the graduates of Frankfort High School, who were farming in the Frankfort community, and who had received credit for two or more years of vocational agriculture.

Non-vocational. The graduates of Vermillion High School, who were farming in the Vermillion community, were termed non-vocational. Vocational agriculture was not offered at this school.

Simple accounts. A minimal record-keeping system which satisfied Internal Revenue Service requirements for income tax purposes was classed as a simple account record-keeping system.

Accounts plus enterprises. In addition to simple accounts a farmer may choose to keep specific records of group marketings of animals within a type of enterprise classification. Market hogs started at approximately the same time and weight, fed the same ration, and marketed at the same time would constitute an enterprise grouping. Farmers included in this category of record keeping calculated their cost per pound of gain, daily gain, and return on investment.

Farm Management Service. Farmers who subscribed to a service sponsored by the Kansas Extension Service and who kept complete records of all enterprises and operations conducted on their farms as well as family living expense accounts were members of Farm Management Service.

Training programs. The vocational agriculture program included only farmers who had two or more years of vocational agriculture on their transcripts. The shop category pertained only to the Vermillion High School graduates and was described as being primarily a wood-working program. Academic classes mentioned in this survey included biology, bookkeeping, and mathematics since they carried a recognizable relationship to farming. Clubs or organizations included the Future Farmers of America conducted in conjunction with vocational agriculture at Frankfort High School.

Young Farmer classes. A class of an organized group of farmers who attended a series of ten to fifteen meetings conducted by vocational agriculture instructors over a period of one year. If the member attended a majority of the meetings held during any one year he was included as a member of the class.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There have been many studies made in follow-ups of graduates of vocational agriculture departments and their occupations. Most of these surveys had shown that about thirty per cent of the graduates had gone into farming. A few studies identified the characteristics of students who went into farming. Work done in the area of factors common to these graduates are reviewed.

Herbert M. Hamlin¹, in his book "Agricultural Education in Community Schools", stated that the entry into farming follows a three phase pattern. The first phase began with the student in Junior high school learning of the opportunities in the challenging field of farming. Some students even selected their occupation at this point. The second phase consisted of preparing for entry into farming, which included acquiring knowledge and skill. The final phase was the early establishment as a farmer when he assumed management responsibility. During the second phase Hamlin cited the fact that farm reared boys did not receive a uniform degree of farming skills when a high school training program was not available to them. This

¹Herbert M. Hamlin, Professor of Agricultural Education, University of Illinois. Agricultural Education in Community Schools (Interstate Printers and Publishers, 1950), pp. 176, 233-236.

would indicate that it would take longer for a non-vocational agriculture student to prepare for entry into farming.

The actual entry into farming may be blocked by the inability to find enough land to make up an economic unit, lack of capital to make the investment necessary for an economic unit, or lack of relatives to financially back such an operation. In a study of male farm youth in Wisconsin, Bjoraker and Sledge² found, almost without exception, that youth indicated the opportunity to start farming relied heavily on the amount of economic and psychological encouragement provided by their parents. Youth indicated that their parents were the number one source of help in making the decision to enter farming. Youth planning to farm made their plans early and less often included college in these plans. Dobbins³ found that immediate families and friends had the greatest influence on occupational and educational aspirations of students. The findings of Eaddy⁴ followed a similar pattern.

²Walter T. Bjoraker and George W. Sledge. "Educational and Occupational Adjustment of Wisconsin Male Youth". Staff Study. Research Bulletin 586, January, 1968. Department of Agriculture and Extension Education. University of Wisconsin.

³Loy H. Dobbins. "Educational and Occupational Aspirations and Expectations of High School Senior Boys in Five Louisiana Parishes". Dissertation, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. 1968.

⁴Vanik S. Eaddy. "The Influence of Selected Factors on the Vocational Choices of Vocational Agriculture Students in Louisiana". Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. 1968.

McCasland⁵, in a study of graduates of Nebraska High Schools with vocational agriculture departments, found that as a student progressed in the number of years of enrollment in vocational agriculture, the number of years before establishment in his present occupation decreased. This was especially true of the graduates who were farming. He also found that the size of the graduates' farms increased with the number of years of enrollment in vocational agriculture. Kahler⁶, found a relationship between the number of semesters of vocational agriculture taken, and the value placed on vocational agriculture, as well as the occupational income of the graduates and their occupational classification. Parker⁷ found that gross income from livestock for vocational agriculture graduates exceeded those in a non-vocational agriculture group.

Piper⁸, in a study of Colorado graduates of high school vocational agriculture programs studied why students did not become

⁵Norval L. McCasland, "Enrollment in Vocational Agriculture Related to Occupational Factors of Nebraska Male High School Graduates". Thesis, M. S., 1967, University of Nebraska.

⁶Alan K. Kahler, "Factors Related to the Occupations of Nebraska Farm Male High School Graduates". Doctor's Thesis. Iowa State University, Ames, 1967.

⁷Leonard C. Parker, "Farm Income of Selected Former Vocational Agriculture Students in Northeast Kansas". Master's Report, Kansas State University, Manhattan, 1967.

⁸James E. Piper, "Factors Influencing Young Men From Not Becoming Established in Production Agriculture". Master's Report, M. Ed., 1968, Colorado State University, Fort Collins.

established in production agriculture. His study identified the following factors which prevented establishment in farming: uncertain income prospects from farming; inability to secure necessary capital; home farm operation was too small for a partnership; family financial obligations prevented entry into farming; and no land was available for entry into farming.

Ottman⁹, in a followup of graduates of Onaga Rural High School in Kansas, found that farm boys who married farm girls had a better chance of entering the farming occupation than did farm boys who married city girls. Fifty-five percent of the farm boys who married farm girls were farming at the time of the report, while only three percent of those who married city girls were farming. Nine percent of the city boys who took vocational agriculture were able to enter the business of farming. He also reported that the investment that a boy had when graduating from high school helped him to become established in farming. Forty-eight percent of the boys now farming had investments of over \$1,000 at the time of graduation from high school, while only four percent of the non-farm boys had investments of over \$1,000.

Benson¹⁰, in a study of factors influencing occupational and educational plans of Nebraska farm boys, found that two thirds of

⁹Leonard R. Ottman, "A Twenty Year Follow-up of Vocational Agriculture Boys at Onaga Rural High School". Master's Report, Kansas State University, Manhattan, 1967.

¹⁰Donovan E. Benson, "Factors Influencing the Occupational and Educational Plans and Pursuits of Nebraska Farm Boys". Master's Thesis, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1968.

these boys, who planned agricultural careers as seniors, planned to farm. One fourth of the boys actually entered the farming business. Of the boys planning to farm he found that they had a great desire for outdoor work. Ringen¹¹, found that seventy-seven percent of the farmers who had taken vocational agriculture were in the occupation they had planned to enter while in high school.

Sjogren, Schroeder, and Sahl¹², in a study of behavioral factors associated with occupations, found that workers in production agriculture had an average to high level rating on the factors of physical, discrimination, intellectual, responsibility, decision making and communicative dimensions. They scored highest on the intellectual, responsibility, and decision making behaviors. This indicated that the supervised farming program of high school vocational agriculture students gave them intellectual stimulation, the opportunity to assume responsibility, and the opportunity to be involved in decision making. This gave them an advantage over students who did not have this program as an aid to establishment in farming.

The degree to which a person is satisfied with his occupation can be related to his preparation for his job. Borchert¹³, found that

¹¹Willis E. Ringen, "Occupational Patterns of Farm Boys Who Graduated from Waterville and Blue Rapids High Schools Between the Years 1951 and 1960". Master's Report, Kansas State University, Manhattan, 1967.

¹²Douglas Sjogran, Wayne Schroeder, and Robert Sahl, "The Identification of Common Behavioral Factors as Bases for Pre-entry Preparation of Workers for Gainful Employment". Research Project No. 50149, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, 1967.

¹³Sidney D. Borchert, "Year of High School Graduation Related to the Occupational Factors of Nebraska Farm Male High School Graduates". Master's Thesis, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1967.

enrollment in vocational agriculture was positively correlated with job satisfaction scores.

Successful programs are known by satisfied participants. Skidmore¹⁴ found that ninety-seven percent of the respondents to his questionnaire had favorable comments concerning their experiences in vocational agriculture and the Future Farmers of America. The value of FFA on their jobs was noted by Somers¹⁵.

The literature concerned itself with the values which farm boys received from vocational agriculture in high school. The values centered in the development of interest in farming, training for a successful farm business, and manner in which a young man entered the business of farming.

¹⁴Harold K. Skidmore, "A Follow-up Study of Students of Vocational Agriculture at Sutton High School from 1930 to 1960". Master's Report, West Virginia University, Morgantown, 1967.

¹⁵Melvin C. Somers, "Follow-up Study of Male Graduates of Vermont High Schools Offering Vocational Agriculture, Classes of 1957". Master's Thesis, University of Maryland, College Park, 1968.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The communities of Frankfort and Vermillion were chosen as the subject for this study because of their similarities, despite their difference in size. The types of farming were similar in each community due to the fact that the Vermillion river runs through the center of each area. Rail service was available in each community so that access to markets for livestock and crops was similar. As a result the farming operations were quite similar in each community.

The ethnic groups were similar in each community. There were slightly higher percentages of German descendents in the Frankfort community and slightly higher percentages of Scandinavian descendents in the Vermillion community. The community of Frankfort had a slightly higher percentage of Catholic families than did the Vermillion community. The socio-economic status of the two communities was very similar. New homes and new business facilities had been constructed in each community.

Frankfort High School had conducted a vocational agriculture program since 1930, while Vermillion High School did not offer this type of training. This provided the setting for comparing farmers with and without the benefit of vocational agriculture training.

A survey was made to determine the number of farmers in Frankfort and Vermillion communities who could be included in this

study. A list with the names of twelve farmers in the Vermillion area was developed. Due to this small number it was decided that an interview type survey should be undertaken in order to insure as many useable returns as possible.

The author decided to use the years 1945 to 1965 as the basis of the sample because this permitted the inclusion of graduates who were firmly established in farming operations. At the same time this kept the number of farmers in the Frankfort area to a limited size so that they could be surveyed by personal interview.

A further review of the interview method disclosed the fact that this method permitted the author to obtain a deeper insight into the reasons why farm youth entered farming. A structured interview form was prepared by surveying related reading materials and by consultation with Dr. James Albracht of the Department of Adult and Occupational Education in the College of Education at Kansas State University. This form was trial tested on young farmers in each of the adjoining communities. From these interviews the author refined the instrument and developed techniques of interviewing which did not influence the response. The techniques of asking questions were carefully studied, since this is one of the major drawbacks for the interview type study.

The interview form was again compared to the objectives of the study. The question, "Did you own livestock while attending high school?", was used with the intention that the respondent would indicate experiences with this livestock. The question, "Did you plan

to farm at the time of graduation from high school?", could indicate the amount of counseling a student had, and who influenced his decision.

The size of the farming operation and the degree of satisfaction the farmer had for his vocation were considered in the measurement of the success of the vocational agriculture program.

The population for this study was obtained by a review of the graduating classes from Vermillion and Frankfort High Schools for the years 1945 to 1965. A total of 287 male graduates were listed on the Frankfort roster, while 100 were listed in the Vermillion file. A listing of graduates by years kept in the Frankfort High School office was quite helpful in making up the list. Pictures of graduating classes were found in the library of the City of Vermillion to provide the names for this list. Two well known natives of each community were questioned as to the status of each graduate. This provided a cross check to avoid missing a possible interview subject. From the Frankfort list thirty-three members were found to be farming at the present time. This list was checked against the transcripts on file at the high school to find the names of farmers who had two or more years of vocational agriculture on this transcript. Three of the thirty-three failed to meet this test, leaving a list of thirty farmers who had taken two or more years of vocational agriculture. The Vermillion list of 100 graduates yielded nine names. Three of the farmers on the preliminary list were found to have graduated from a different high school.

Appointments for the interviews were made by telephone. Due to the study being conducted during a busy farming season it was necessary to make most of the interviews at night. Upon arrival at the home, the author introduced himself and stated the purpose of the visit. As a "lead-in" the farmer was asked if he would answer a few questions regarding his entry into farming. The respondent was assured that all information presented would be held in strict confidence. The form was also shown to each man to assure him that his name did not appear on the form. The only local reference made was to indicate the community the graduate represented. In no case was information given by previous respondents divulged.

Due to the fact that one of the Vermillion graduates followed the custom combine route to the Canadian border he was left off the list since he was not expected to return to the community until after this study was completed. Six of the members of the Frankfort group could not be contacted until the deadline for the completion of the study had passed. Three of the members of the Frankfort graduating class were found to receive less than half of their income from farming and were not included.

The comparison of the results of the interviews of twenty vocational agriculture and eight non-vocational agriculture graduates was made by frequency statistics. Tables were constructed and the data tabulated. Summary and conclusion statements were developed from the findings, and recommendations were stated.

CHAPTER IV

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to compare the graduates from a high school with vocational agriculture with graduates from a high school without vocational agriculture as to factors which influenced them to become farmers. Information indicated the size of the farming operation, type of farming records kept, satisfaction with farming, and intentions of farming upon graduation from high school.

The findings, as shown in Table I, compared twenty graduates of vocational agriculture from the Frankfort community, hereafter referred to as vocational graduates, with eight non-vocational agriculture graduates from the Vermillion community, hereafter referred to as non-vocational graduates. Three of the vocational graduates were not included in the study because they were part-time farmers and one of the non-vocational graduates was omitted because he was out of the area and could not be contacted.

TABLE I
A COMPARISON OF INTERVIEWS USED TO
THE SAMPLE SELECTED

	Number available	Number used
Vocational	23	20
Non-vocational	9	8
Total	32	28

Based on the calculations described in Appendix A, the estimated gross income for the vocational group was \$29,970 compared to a gross income estimate of \$25,720 for the non-vocational graduates. The responses in Table II indicated that total farm acreage was larger for the vocational graduates. One of the vocational graduates owned land but did not rent. Four rented but did not own land. The other fifteen owned and rented land. Two of the non-vocational graduates owned land but did not rent, two rented land but did not own, and four owned and rented land. Thirteen of the vocational graduates and three of the non-vocational graduates operated farms of over 640 acres.

TABLE II

A COMPARISON OF TWENTY VOCATIONAL GRADUATES WITH
EIGHT NON-VOCATIONAL GRADUATES AS TO FARM SIZE

Farm size	Owned		Rented		Owned & rented	
	voc.	non-voc.	voc.	non-voc.	voc.	non-voc.
80-159 acres	5	2	1	0	0	0
160-319 acres	6	1	4	1	1	0
320-639 acres	5	3	6	3	6	5
640 or more	0	0	8	2	13	3
Total	16	6	19	6	20	8

The information in Table III showed that the vocational graduates rented more crop land than did the non-vocational graduates.

Fourteen of the twenty vocational graduates had crop acres of 200 or more compared to three of the eight non-vocational graduates. The total of owned and rented crop acreage favored the vocational graduates by a wide margin.

TABLE III

A COMPARISON OF TWENTY VOCATIONAL GRADUATES WITH
EIGHT NON-VOCATIONAL GRADUATES AS TO CROP ACRES

Crop acres	Owned		Rented		Owned & rented	
	voc.	non-voc.	voc.	non-voc.	voc.	non-voc.
50-99 acres	6	3	1	0	0	0
100-199 acres	8	1	4	3	1	4
200-399 acres	2	2	9	3	12	2
400 or more	0	0	5	0	7	2
Total	16	6	19	6	20	8

Vocational graduates tended to own more beef cattle operations, while the non-vocational graduates owned hogs to a greater extent. In Table IV it will be noted that the beef cattle owners tended to add more of the supplemental systems to their operation to increase gross income in the vocational graduate column. In the thirteen cow herd operations it was found that eight operators wintered the calves to add to the gross income per cow. Only one of the non-vocational

graduates followed this plan. The other livestock operations appeared to be similar for the vocational and non-vocational graduates.

TABLE IV
A COMPARISON OF TWENTY VOCATIONAL GRADUATES WITH EIGHT
NON-VOCATIONAL GRADUATES AS TO LIVESTOCK SYSTEMS

Livestock system	Voc.		Non-voc.		Total	
	no.	%*	no.	%	no.	%
Beef cow-feeder calf	13	65	5	62	18	64
Beef cow-creep fed	0	00	1	12	1	3.5
Market steer & heifer	5	25	1	12	6	21.4
Wintering yearlings	8	40	1	12	9	32
Sow & litter	9	45	5	62	14	50
Market hogs	8	40	4	50	12	43
Dairy cattle	1	5	1	12	2	7

* Percentages are rounded off to the nearest whole percent.

Teaching record keeping is an important part of any vocational agriculture department. The results of this study indicated that farmers with this type of training kept more complete records. The responses in Table V indicated that fifty percent of the vocational graduates keep advanced type records compared to thirty-seven and a half percent of the non-vocational graduates.

A high percentage of all farmers interviewed had parental assistance in entering farming as shown in Table VI, with nineteen of the twenty vocational members receiving this type of assistance.

TABLE V

A COMPARISON OF TWENTY VOCATIONAL GRADUATES WITH EIGHT
NON-VOCATIONAL GRADUATES AS TO RECORD-KEEPING SYSTEM

Record system	Voc.		Non-voc.		Total	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Simple accounts	10	50	5	62.5	15	53
Accounts plus enter- prises	9	45	2	25	11	39
Farm Management Service	1	5	1	12.5	2	8
Total	20	100	8	100	28	100

TABLE VI

A COMPARISON OF TWENTY VOCATIONAL GRADUATES WITH EIGHT
NON-VOCATIONAL GRADUATES AS TO METHODS OF
OBTAINING FARMING STATUS

Sources	Voc.		Non-voc.		Total	
	no.*	%	no.	%	no.	%
Parents	19	95	6	75	25	89
Other relatives	1	5	1	12.5	2	7
Savings	6	30	1	12.5	7	25
Inheritance	1	5	0	00	1	3.5
Marriage	0	00	1	12.5	1	3.5
Started as renter	5	25	4	50	9	32

* Several respondents indicated more than one choice as being important for obtaining farming status.

Parents helped six of the eight farmers in the non-vocational group to gain farming status. Assistance consisted of use of machinery, co-signing notes for borrowed money, and financial grants. A much smaller percentage of the vocational group started farming as full time renters than was the case of the non-vocational group.

A higher percentage of the vocational graduates tended to be more satisfied with the occupation of farming than was the case of the non-vocational graduates. Most of the respondents, who chose the reasonably satisfied category, mentioned that they would feel highly satisfied if the price structure was more favorable in farm commodity prices. A rating of highly satisfied was given by fifteen of the vocational graduates as Table VII indicated. The other five indicated that they were reasonably satisfied with farming as an occupation, while the other four non-vocational graduates rated their attitude as reasonably satisfied.

TABLE VII

A COMPARISON OF TWENTY VOCATIONAL GRADUATES WITH EIGHT
NON-VOCATIONAL GRADUATES AS TO THEIR
SATISFACTION WITH FARMING

Degrees satisfaction	Voc.		Non-voc.		Total	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Highly satisfied	15	75	4	50	19	67.8
Reasonably satisfied	5	25	4	50	9	32.2
Indifferent	0	00	0	00	00	00
Somewhat dissatisfied	0	00	0	00	00	00
Very dissatisfied	0	00	0	00	00	00
Total	20	100	8	100	28	100

The graduates of Vermillion High School did not perceive their high school training to be a significant factor in their decision to enter farming. Mathematics, however, was considered highly useful by one of these members. Because their shop class was largely a woodworking class, five farmers considered this program as moderately useful, while three members listed it as slightly useful. In contrast, ten of the Frankfort High School graduates rated vocational agriculture as highly useful, with the remaining ten listing it as moderately useful. Three of the latter group listed work in the Future Farmers of America chapter as being highly useful. These three members were extremely active in judging contest activities. Table VIII compared these ratings.

TABLE VIII

A COMPARISON OF TWENTY VOCATIONAL GRADUATES WITH EIGHT NON-VOCATIONAL GRADUATES AS TO THE VALUE OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN THEIR ENTRY INTO FARMING

Educational program	Voc. weighted value*	Non-voc. weighted value
Vocational agriculture	2.5	--
Shop classes	--	1.7
Academic classes	1.8	1.7
Guidance information	0	0
Clubs or organizations	2.4	0

* The following values were used in compiling the averages shown:
Highly useful 3, Moderately useful 2, Slightly useful 1, None 0.

All of the vocational graduates lived on a farm while attending high school. Table IX points up the fact that all, except one, of the non-vocational graduates lived on a farm while attending high school.

Another significant finding of this study was the high percentage of vocational graduates who planned to farm at the time of their graduation compared to the non-vocational group. In Table IX we find seventy-five percent of the vocational graduates planning to farm compared to sixty-two percent of the non-vocational graduates.

All of the vocational graduates owned livestock while attending high school. This factor has been pointed out by many researchers as being an important factor in encouraging youth to enter the vocation of farming. Sixteen of the vocational graduates owned enough livestock at graduation time to be of value in making a start in farming. Only four of the non-vocational graduates reported owning enough livestock to be of any value towards entry into farming upon graduation from high school. A total of seven of the eight non-vocational graduates reported owning livestock at some time during their attendance in high school as noted in Table IX.

TABLE IX

A COMPARISON OF TWENTY VOCATIONAL GRADUATES WITH EIGHT NON-VOCATIONAL GRADUATES AS TO FARMING FACTORS WHILE IN HIGH SCHOOL

Factors	Voc.		Non-voc.		Total	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Lived on a farm	20	100	7	87.5	27	96
Owned livestock	20	100	7	87.5	27	96
Planned to farm	15	75	5	62.5	20	71.4

The findings of this study followed the pattern of some other studies which indicated that students planning to farm did not include in their future plans attendance at college. One of the vocational group had one year of college work, while one of the non-vocational graduates attended college for one year and one attended only one semester. Three of the vocational group attended veterans on-the-farm training classes after completion of their service responsibilities. Two of these members, who attended the same class, considered this factor as highly useful in their preparation for farming. The third member was quite critical of the poor training provided in the school he attended. Working with experienced farmers, including their father, was the overwhelming choice of both groups as the number one means of preparation for farming, as Table X indicates. Generally speaking, all of the respondents read a lot of magazines in the farm category. This reading was rated as the major factor in keeping up to date with new farming practices.

Half of both groups attended meetings conducted by the Kansas Extension Service. A significant item came from the comments of a large number of respondents as to attendance at such meetings. Most common was the comment, "I would like to attend these meetings, but haven't made it yet." The principal reason given for non-attendance was that they didn't know about the meeting far enough ahead of time to schedule attendance. The Farm Management Service members indicated attendance, because of knowledge of the meetings through a regular

TABLE X
A COMPARISON OF TWENTY VOCATIONAL GRADUATES WITH EIGHT NON-
VOCATIONAL GRADUATES AS TO TYPES OF EDUCATION
IN PREPARING TO FARM

	Voc.		Non-voc.	
	no.	weighted value*	no.	weighted value
College	1	2.0	2	1.0
Veterans on-farm-training	3	1.5	0	0.0
Work for experienced farmers	20	2.9	8	2.87
Attending Extension meetings	3	1.0	2	1.0
Reading	20	1.9	8	2.12

* The value rating was calculated from the following scores:
First choice, 3 points; Second choice, 2 points; third choice,
1 point.

newsletter. As Table XI indicated, there was little difference between the vocational and non-vocational group in the percentage attending Extension Service sponsored programs. There was a great difference in attendance at Young Farmers meetings. Half of the vocational group reported attendance compared to none of the graduates of the non-vocational program. A majority of both groups reported awareness of the Young Farmer Organization. One of the vocational graduates, who was about thirty-five years old, considered himself too old to be called a young farmer and had not attended in recent years for this reason.

TABLE XI

A COMPARISON OF TWENTY VOCATIONAL GRADUATES WITH EIGHT NON-VOCATIONAL GRADUATES AS TO THEIR PARTICIPATION IN SELECTED PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Activity	Voc.		Non-voc.		Total	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
County Extension meetings	10	50	4	50	14	50
KSU Field days	11	55	4	50	15	53.5
Young Farmer classes	10	50	0	00	10	35.7

In summary, the major results of this study indicated that a student who owned and kept records on livestock, was encouraged to read farm magazines, was active in the Future Farmers of America organization, and made plans early to become a farmer while in high school had a better chance to become established as a farmer than the student who did not have access to these programs. Vocational graduates had larger farming operations, more crop acres, kept more complete farm business records, and were somewhat more satisfied with farming.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The problems of developing and determining interest in farming, identifying types of education for the occupation, and making an entry into farming were studied in this project.

The graduates of Frankfort High School, where vocational agriculture was taught, were compared to the graduates of Vermillion High School, where vocational agriculture was not taught. Twenty graduates of the vocational program and eight graduates of the non-vocational program, who were full-time farmers, were interviewed in this study.

It was found that the vocational agriculture graduates had developed a greater interest in farming while in high school, had received more training for farming as evidenced by their larger farming operations, and had developed a larger livestock program as a method of pre-entry into farming than did the non-vocational graduates.

The author concluded as a result of the findings of this study that vocational agriculture continued to be an influence in developing a youth's interest in farming as evidenced by the high rating given this program by graduates. The results of the study indicated that supervised farming experiences needed to be stressed to assist the student in becoming established in farming.

Another implication of this study for the instructor of vocational agriculture was to encourage youth to read. There was a relationship between the size of the business and the number of farm magazines which were read. The larger farmers with the highest adjusted gross income did more reading. Several of the vocational respondents encouraged the vocational agriculture student to take part in judging contest work. They mentioned the crop judging work as being important.

The teacher should continue to encourage his students to seek all of the educational training they are capable of securing. When first asked the question about ranking types of education in preparation for farming, a high majority of the respondents considered that this had reference to the ideal plan and ranked college as the number one type of training. Their comments indicated their feeling of the need for a high level of training needed to farm today.

The high rating given vocational agriculture as a factor in preparing a student to become a farmer indicated that the emphasis placed on production agriculture at the time of their attendance was justified. The necessity of the son having definite ownership of productive livestock and the keeping of records on this stock was stressed by vocational graduates as a means of preparing for entry into farming. Responses indicated that the future farmer should be encouraged to develop as large an operation as facilities on the home farm would permit. This was evidenced by the fact that sixteen of the vocational graduates owned enough livestock at the time

of graduation from high school to make a significant entry into farming. Farm youth can build a much larger equity in production agriculture at this time than at any other time in their life.

Participation in the activities of the Future Farmers of America Chapter appeared to have influence on training a youth for leadership and citizenship responsibilities. Respondents indicated a high value for this type of activity in preparation for their participation in community programs.

One implication of this study indicated the apparent lack of vocational graduates to perceive the value of the guidance program.

Farmers interviewed in this study indicated their desire to attend meetings conducted on new practices in farming. They indicated that they did not attend very many of these meetings because of schedule conflicts. They indicated that they could schedule their attendance if they had more advanced information on the times of meetings. Vocational agriculture instructors need to publicize Young Farmer class meetings as far in advance as possible.

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APPENDICES

* Data taken from 1969 Farm Management Association Summaries.

The following example is provided to explain the system:

Total acres..640, crop acres..390, beef cow herd..50, calves
also wintered, sow & litter..12 sows (2 litters each)

Deductions from crop acreage:

16 acres for cow herd plus 6 acres for wintering the calves,
3 acres for the 12 sows for a total of 25 acres

Crop acres	390	
less deductions	<u>25</u>	
Balance crop acres	365	@ \$40/acre gross income...\$14,600
Gross income from 50 cows (92% calf crop), calves wintered		10,580
Gross income from 12 sows, 2 litters as feeder pigs		<u>3,840</u>
		\$29,020

APPENDIX B

Survey Form 1

Size of farm	Owned	Rented
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160-319 acres
320-639 acres
640 acres or more

Crop acreage	Owned	Rented
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50-99 acres
100-199 acres
200-399 acres
400 or more

Livestock program	cow herd feeders	cow herd creep fed	market steers	cattle heifers	Wintering yearlings
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Beef system

Sow & litter

Market hogs

Hog system

grade A

grade B

Dairy cows

Records kept: (Circle the correct system used)

Simple accounts

Accounts plus enterprises

Farm Management Services

Were you a member of a 4-H Club? _____ No. years _____

Were you a member of FFA? _____ No. years _____

Jobs held since graduation from high school (most recent first)

Title

19__ to 19__
19__ to 19__
19__ to 19__
19__ to 19__

How did you obtain farming status?

Parents

Other relatives _____

Savings

Inheritance

Marriage

Started as renter

Other _____

How earned _____
(savings)

Survey Form II

What is your degree of satisfaction with the business of farming?

Highly satisfied _____ Somewhat dissatisfied _____
 Reasonably satisfied _____ Very dissatisfied _____
 Indifferent _____

Indicate the degree of usefulness which your high school courses had towards your entry into farming:

	Highly useful	Moderately useful	Slightly useful	None
Vocational agriculture	_____	_____	_____	_____
Shop classes	_____	_____	_____	_____
Academic courses	_____	_____	_____	_____
Guidance information	_____	_____	_____	_____
Clubs or organizations	_____	_____	_____	_____

Did you live on a farm while attending high school? _____

Did you own livestock while attending high school? _____

Did you plan to farm when you finished high school? _____

How would you rank the following types of education in preparing you to farm? Indicate your first, second, and third choices.

College	Vocational school	Working for experienced farmers	Attending Extension meetings	Reading
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Do you attend meetings conducted by County Extension agents? _____

Do you attend field days conducted by Kansas State University? _____

Have you attended Young Farmer Classes? _____

A COMPARISON OF THE RESPONSES OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE AND
NON-VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE STUDENTS AS TO FACTORS
INFLUENCING THEM TO BECOME FARMERS

by

BERNARD ROBERT JACOBSON

B. S., Kansas State University, 1947

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Adult and Occupational Education
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1970

The major purpose of this study was to compare vocational agriculture and non-vocational agriculture graduates in their entry into farming. Graduates responded to factors such as job satisfaction, size of farming operation, business procedures, interests while in high school, and organizations and activities of the graduates while in high school.

The study included the farmers who graduated from two adjoining high schools in the years 1945 to 1965. One high school, Frankfort, conducted a vocational agriculture program during this time, while the other high school at Vermillion did not offer vocational agriculture. Data was obtained from eight farmers in the Vermillion area and twenty farmers in the Frankfort community.

The study determined that farmers who graduated in vocational agriculture had larger farming operations, kept more advanced records, were more satisfied with farming operations, and more had intended to farm upon graduation from high school than was the case of the farmers graduating from the high school without vocational agriculture.

Advanced record keeping systems were more in evidence among the vocational agriculture graduates. Fifty percent of this group were keeping partial or complete enterprise accounts compared to thirty-seven percent of the non-vocational graduates.

The assistance of parents or other relatives in gaining entry into farming was very much in evidence in both groups. Parents helped nineteen of the twenty vocational agriculture graduates to

start farming. Six of the eight non-vocational graduates were assisted by their parents when they started farming. Renting land to start farming was more popular with the non-vocational group. Half of the group started as full-time renters compared to a fourth of the vocational agriculture graduates.

Vocational agriculture graduates tended to be more satisfied with the business of farming as a vocation. Fifteen of the vocational agriculture graduates selected the rating of highly satisfied, compared to four of the non-vocational group. The remaining five and four, respectively, rated their status as reasonably satisfied.

Vocational agriculture tended to receive high ratings as a factor in preparing the graduates for entry into farming. In contrast, the non-vocational group did not perceive any of their high school classes as being highly useful in farming.

A high percentage of the vocational agriculture graduates planned to farm when they finished high school. Fifteen indicated that they planned to farm when they graduated, while five of the eight non-vocational graduates planned to farm.

Livestock ownership to the extent of making entry into farming easier was reported by sixteen of the vocational agriculture graduates. Livestock ownership by vocational agriculture students continued to be a significant factor in encouraging youth to become farmers. Half of the non-vocational group owned livestock at graduation time.

Only three members of either group reported attendance at college after high school graduation, but a large number rated college training as important for the farmer of tomorrow.

Ranking second only to working with experienced farmers was the factor of reading farm magazines as a means of keeping up to date on new farming practices. This factor continued to give importance to the practice of encouraged magazine reading in vocational agriculture courses.

Half of the vocational agriculture graduates had taken part in Young Farmer classes, and none of the non-vocational members had attended these classes. An implication for anyone scheduling meetings of farm people was the low attendance at Extension Service functions. A high percentage of all farmers interviewed indicated they would like to attend more of these meetings, but did not know about them far enough in advance of the meeting to keep their schedule clear for attendance.