

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF FORMAL LIFE
RURAL HIGH SCHOOL VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE STUDENTS

by 941

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INTRODUCTION

In an address delivered by H. N. Hunsicker,¹ Program Specialist, U. S. Office of Education, at the 1960 North Atlantic Regional Conference of Vocational Agriculture Supervisors and Teacher Trainers, he asked:

Will Vocational Agriculture training cease to be important?...A high school principal told his Board of Education recently, 'We have enough farmers - there is no further need for Vocational Agriculture in this school.' What about young men who are bound for college? Will Vocational Agriculture instruction hinder their advancement? A dean of agriculture told a group of leading educators at a national meeting, 'I am almost convinced that vocational agriculture works to the real detriment of the college program which follows it.' (Research shows however, this is not true.)

"What Should Vocational Agriculture be Like in the Sixties" was the title of a study made by G. Herman Porter, Research Analyst, State Curriculum Study, Raleigh, North Carolina. In this study Mr. Porter found that:

The policies, objectives and the ideal methods for carrying out vocational education in agriculture were directed toward farmer clients. Yet most of the boys who were enrolled as high school students, had vocational interests other than farming and were enrolled largely to get the shopwork.

Meyers² quoted Clarence Cunningham who had studied the records of freshmen who had entered the College of Agriculture

¹H. N. Hunsicker. "A Look at Vocational Agriculture for Tomorrow." Agriculture Education Magazine, February, 1961, 33:8.

²Dr. Harold E. Meyers. "Vocational Agriculture - Boost or Bust in College." American Vocational Journal, Vol. 36, No. 3, March, 1961.

at Ohio State in 1953 and finished in 1957 who found:

Students with vocational agriculture training in high school had a higher scholastic record in technical agriculture, mathematics, botany and chemistry, and on the average of their total college program than did the students without vocational agriculture in high school. However they did not do quite as well in English.

We need students in Colleges of Agriculture with the supervised farming experience that can be gained from vocational agriculture.

Research has shown that there is no course or curriculum that will prepare students for academic success in college any better than another. Specifically, the available evidence shows that the experiences acquired in the vocational agriculture program help to provide attitudes, appreciation, experiences and educational background needed for academic success in higher education.

Meyers concluded:

On the basis of this evidence as well as on the basis of personal experience, I am convinced that a good high school vocational agriculture program is a satisfactory preparation for college and university work.

With articles such as the above appearing in many magazines and newspapers, the writer decided to see if he could find what his former students were doing. A study was planned to ascertain whether the students were actually entering the field of agriculture after high school in as large percentages as they were 30 years ago. The study was also designed to find if they were not entering upon farming as an occupation; what occupations they were choosing.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LAKIN COMMUNITY
AND THE PEOPLE INHABITING IT
(1961)

The town of Lakin is located on Highway 50 and also on

the Arkansas River. It is the County Seat of Kearney County with a 1961 population of approximately 1300. At the time of this report it had a Rural High School district, and a separate consolidated Grade School district. The grade school had an enrollment of just over 400, while the high school was Class A with an enrollment of approximately 165. Kearney County is located in the north edge of the Hugoton gas field and the high school has two Natural Gas Company Compressor Stations in the district.

The primary industries were farming and the production and transportation phases of the natural gas industry. A number of the people who were employed by the gas companies also farmed part time.

The population of Lakin and the surrounding district is heterogenous as to nationality. In 1961 they were mostly agricultural as to background, if not actually pursuing farming as an occupation. Kearney County contained 310 farms with each farm averaging 1,721 acres in size.¹

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to determine the present occupational status of, 1950 to 1960 inclusive, students of the Lakin Rural High School who had taken one or more years of vocational agriculture.

¹U.S. Dept. of Commerce, "1959 Census of Agriculture." Preliminary. Kearney County, Kansas.

Within rather broad limits the study was expected to further inform one as to the financial status of these various age groups in which the former students were found.

The study further attempted to learn which areas of vocational agriculture instruction had proven the most valuable, and the least valuable to the student since leaving high school.

PROCEDURE

After the topic for this report was selected, the writer interviewed Dr. R. J. Ager, Dr. Russell Drumwright, Professor Howard Bradley, of the Department of Education, Kansas State University, and others about the problem.

When it was decided to use the questionnaire form of descriptive research, Dr. R. J. Ager and Dr. Russell Drumwright, Department of Education, Kansas State University, were consulted during the phrasing of the questionnaire and cover letter.

The information in this study was secured by mailing questionnaires along with cover letters and stamped self-addressed envelopes to 86 young men on May 11, 1961. These people represented all the students of the Lakin Vocational Agriculture Department during the years 1950 to 1960 inclusive, with the exception of four who were deceased and one former student who was in an institution and unable to be contacted by the questionnaire. Of the 86 questionnaires mailed out, four were returned because of wrong address. The writer was unable to obtain correct addresses for any of the four returned questionnaires.

Seventy two per cent of the questionnaires were returned without any sort of follow-up procedure. Upon instituting follow-up procedure consisting of a combination of follow-up letters with questionnaires and stamped self-addressed envelopes enclosed, telephone contacts, and personal visits, seventy-five usable questionnaires were returned by June 23. This made a return of 88.37 per cent of the questionnaires which were mailed to the former students.

The notes which were returned with some of the questionnaires were of great personal interest to the writer.

A copy of the cover letter, questionnaire, and follow-up letter may be found in the appendix.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The terms listed below were defined for use in this study and particularly refer to Table 2.

Related occupations for the purposes of this study, includes carpenter, mechanic, cotton gin foreman, Farmers Co-op employee and hardware store clerk.

Engineer includes all engineers, petroleum, chemical, etc.

Salesman includes both salesman and finance company representative.

LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to a follow-up of the former student of vocational agriculture at Lakin Rural High School during the school years 1949-50 to 1959-60 inclusive. The reasons for these limitations were: The school year 1949-50 was the first year Lakin offered vocational agriculture in its high school curriculum and 1959-60 was the last year in which students could have been out of school one or more years.

The study was not limited to graduates of the Lakin High School but included all students who had attended classes in vocational agriculture one or more years as a part of their high school program.

It was the feeling of the writer that if the income group breakdown was rather large there wouldn't be so much hesitancy encountered on the part of the former students in filling out and returning the questionnaire. Also the list of occupations on the questionnaire was rather brief with the open ended choice presented under K.¹

For the advantages of clearness and brevity the choices under questions nine and ten were meant to cover rather broad areas of instruction rather than specific fields.

In the eleven year period covered, the 66 questionnaires

¹See Appendix - page 24.

mailed represented all the boys who had been enrolled for one year or longer in vocational agriculture at Lakin Rural High School with the exception of four former students who were deceased; and one in an institution.

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

Among people in the field of Education, and particularly among people more directly associated with Vocational Agriculture Education, for some time there has been evident a growing concern about the declining number of students enrolled in Vocational Agriculture in our schools. There has also been evident a growing concern about the supposedly declining number of graduates who continue in the occupational field of agriculture.

Thomas W. Bruner¹ wrote in the 1925-26 Kansas school year that 49.2 per cent of the boys who had taken vocational agriculture and had been out of school seven years or longer were farming, while 50.8 per cent of those students were in some other field of occupation.

Smothers² wrote of the period from 1920-29 that 48 per cent of vocational agriculture graduates were in agricultural occupations. He further wrote that the percentage of students who take Vocational Courses in High School and then pursue that

¹Thomas W. Bruner. "A Study of the Place of Residence and Choice of Vocations of Former Vocational Agriculture Students in Kansas High Schools," M.S. Thesis, Agriculture Education, Kansas State College.

²H. D. Smothers, "A Comparison of the Occupational Careers of the Graduates of Vocational and Non Vocational Courses of the Newton, Iowa, High School," M.S. Thesis, 1931, Iowa.

vocation after graduation is higher in agriculture than any other vocation.

Tom¹, in a Cornell Staff Study published in 1960, tried to determine how well former students of vocational agriculture have done in college.

"Of the 93 major findings reported, 53.8 per cent showed that the vocational group did better than the non vocational group, 36.6 per cent showed they did just as well and only 9.6 per cent showed that the vocational group did poorer than the non-vocational one."

McFatter², found in a study covering Vocational Agriculture Graduates of Plain Dealing High School (Louisiana) from 1928-50 that 37.6 per cent engaged in occupations related to farming, with 13.8 per cent engaged in occupations related to farming, making a total of 51.4 per cent in farming or related occupations.

McCormick³, in a Master's Report completed in 1959 determined that 36.4 per cent of Vocational Agriculture graduates were farming with 11.7 per cent of the graduates in related occupations, making 48.1 per cent of vocational agriculture graduates engaged in farming or related occupations. This study.

¹Fredrick K. T. Tom, "College Success of Former Students of Vocational Agriculture," Staff Study, 1960, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

²Oren S. McFatter, "A Study of the Occupational Status of Former Graduates of Vocational Agriculture of Plain Dealing High School," 1928-1950, M.S. Thesis, 1951 Louisiana.

³Floyd G. McCormick, "Status of Former Vocational Agriculture Graduates," M.S. Report, M. Ed. 1959, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado.

further showed 23.5 per cent graduates in non-agricultural occupations, 7.4 per cent enrolled in college, 8.4 per cent in the armed forces and 12.6 per cent unknown.

The Department of Vocational Education¹, Kansas State University, showed that:

1. Men who hired vocational agriculture graduates were well satisfied with effect training apparently had upon men studied.
2. Most of these vocational agriculture graduates rated exceptional or outstanding in producing or getting the job done.
3. Furthermore these graduates knew how to work and do a job.
4. That, of the training received in Vocational Agriculture, Supervised farming, farm medicine, and F.F.A. training was the most beneficial.

H. R. Bradley² in a continuing 5 year follow-up study of 1959 vocational agriculture graduates in Kansas found evidence to indicate that marital status is a definite influencing factor in the occupational choice of vocational agriculture students.

FINDINGS

Seventy-five individuals returned usable questionnaires. Twenty-three of these 75 individuals fell into the \$3,000 or

¹Department of Vocational Education, Manhattan, "Success of Agriculture Graduates in Farm-Related Businesses." Non-Thesis Study, 1960, 80 p., Kansas State University.

²H. R. Bradley, "Occupational Status of the 1959 Kansas High School Graduates Majoring in Vocational Agriculture. and Phase of a Continuing 5-year Study." Department of Education, Kansas State University, Manhattan, 1961.

less income bracket, the average age was 20.6 years. Only two of these young men were married. Their occupational fields were: college student 11, armed forces 5, one mechanic, one service station attendant, one carpenter, and five who were engaged in some phase of farming completed this group.

Table 1. Estimate of income.

Income Bracket	Number	Number in Bracket	Per Cent of Total in this Bracket	Average Age in Years	Number Married in this Bracket	Per Cent Married
\$3,000 or less	75	23	32.	20.6	2	8.9
\$3,000 to \$4,500	75	22	29.	23.5	16	73.
\$4,500 to \$6,000	75	15	20	22.9	14	93.8
\$6,000 to \$7,500	75	8	10.66	24.5	6	75.
\$7,500 or more	75	7	9.32	26.1	7	100.

Of the 22 individuals who fell into the \$3,000 to \$4,500 income bracket, the average age was 23.5 years. Sixteen, or 73 per cent of these individuals were married and six were single. Their occupational fields were: armed forces 2, mechanic 2, service station attendant 2, farming 10, Natural Gas Company service man 1, warehouse clerk 1, cost account clerk 1, hardware store clerk 1, merchant 1, custodian 1.

Of the 15 individuals who fell into the \$4,500 to \$6,000 group, the average age was 22.9 years. Fourteen, or 93.8 per cent of this group were married with only one being single. Their occupational fields were: farming 4, full time and one part time, Columbia Carbon maintenance men 1, teacher 1, college student 1,

telegrapher 1, armed forces 1, tool dresser 1, Finance Company representative 1, Natural Gas Company clerk 1, and mechanic 1, related occupation 2.

Of the eight individuals who fell into the \$6,000 to \$7,500 group, the average age was 24.5 years. Six, or 75 per cent of this group were married with 2 remaining single. Their occupational fields were: merchant 1, electronics computer programmer 1, jet pilot 1, carpenter 1, petroleum engineer 1, engineer 1, farming 1, and cotton gin foreman 1.

Of the individuals who came into the \$7,500 and above group, the average age was 26.1 years. 100 per cent of them were married. Their occupational fields were: Farming 2, electronics field engineer 1, chemical engineer 1, contractor 1, salesman (construction) 1, and 1 carpenter who was also an extended day college student.

In table 2 it would appear that occupations with the oldest average age covered in the questionnaire¹ used in this study was that of engineer with an average age of 27.8 years. The next oldest age for an occupation was that of Natural Gas Company Service man with 27, 3rd was merchant with 26.5, 4th clerk 24, 5th service station attendant 23.5, 6th farming with 23.4, 7th related occupations with 22.6, 8th armed forces with 21.6, and the occupational group with the youngest average age was the college students with an average age of 20.4 years.

¹See Appendix - page 24.

Table 2. Occupations presently employed in.

Occupations	: Total : Number	: Number : in this : Occupation	: Per Cent : in this : Occupation	: Average : Age	: Per Cent : Married	: Per Cent : Un- : married
Farming	75	22	29.3	23.4	54.5	45.5
Related Occupations	75	12	16.0	22.6	75.0	25.0
College Student	75	12	16.0	20.4	7.8	92.2
Armed Forces	75	9	12.0	21.6	66.0	34.0
Engi- neer	75	5	6.6	27.8	100.0	00.0
Clerk	75	3	4.0	24.0	100.0	00.0
Service Station Attend- ant	75	2	2.6	23.5	100.0	00.0
Merchant	75	2	2.6	26.5	100.0	00.0
Natural Gas Co. Service Man	75	2	2.6	27.0	100.0	00.0
Salesman	75	2	2.6	25.5	100.0	00.0
Tele- grapher	75	1	1.3	19.0	100.0	00.0
Teacher	75	1	1.3	25.0	100.0	00.0
Tool Dresser	75	1	1.3	29.0	100.0	00.0
Cus- todian	75	1	1.3	25.0	100.0	00.0
Contractor	75	1	1.3	27.0	100.0	00.0

The occupations of telegrapher, teacher, tool dresser, custodian and contractor were shown in table 2 but were not discussed as there was only one individual in each occupation and not an average of two or more.

It would also appear from table 2 that the occupations with the older average ages show a higher per cent of employees who are married.

It should also be noted that 29.3 per cent of the people in this study were directly engaged in the business of farming. With another 16 per cent engaged in occupations related to farming, making a total of 45.3 per cent in farming or related occupations. This appears to compare rather well with Smothers¹ who reported that, "48-per cent of Vocational Agriculture graduates in agricultural occupations". He also reported further that "the percentage of students who take vocational courses in high school and then pursue that vocation after graduation is higher in agriculture than any other vocation".

Question 9 on the questionnaire² was designed to find which areas of instruction the former student felt had been of most value to him since leaving school. Question 10³ was designed to find out which areas of instruction the former students felt had been of least use or help to him since leaving school.

¹H. D. Smothers, "A Comparison of the Occupational Careers of the Graduates of Vocational and Non Vocational Courses of the Newton, Iowa, High School", M. S. thesis, 1931, Iowa.

²See Appendix - page 24.

³See Appendix - page 24.

Table 3 shows that of the 22 individuals engaged in farming 14 or 63.6 per cent of them believe the instruction received in Farm Mechanics to have been of the most use to them since their leaving school.

There were 2 individuals engaged in related occupations, of these one or 50 per cent thought Farm Mechanics to have been of the most benefit to him.

There were 12 individuals enrolled in college, of these 12 men 6 of them thought that the instruction received in Farm Mechanics had been more beneficial to them than any of the other areas covered.

There were 9 people in the Armed Forces. Of these 9 men 4 thought that the instruction received in the area of Farm Mechanics had been more valuable to them, since leaving high school than had the instruction received in other areas.

Of the 30 individuals engaged in the other occupations there were usually only one or two, at most 3 people in one occupation. Of these 30 men 21 of them indicated on their returns, that they believed the instruction they had received in Farm Mechanics to have been more beneficial to them than instruction in other areas since leaving school.

The instructional areas which the former students thought to have been the least helpful since their leaving school: 13 or 17.3 per cent thought that study of livestock production had been of the least help to them. Eight or 10.6 per cent thought that supervised farming had been of the least help, 16 or 21.3 thought that cropping systems had been of the least help to them. Four

Table 3. Vocational agriculture instruction which has been of most help since graduation.

Occupations	:Livestock	:Production	:Supervised	:Cropping	:Farm	:partic-	:Livestock
:occupation	:Systems	:Farming	:Systems	:Mechanics	:in	:tion	:Jugging
							:work
Farming	22	2	2	1	14	2	1
Related Occupations	2		1		1		1
College Student	12		1		6		5
Armed Forces	9	1	3		4		1
Service Station attendant	3	1			2		
Company Maintenance Men	2		1		2		1
Engineer	3				2		
Mechanic	4				4		
Merchant	2				1		1
Contractor	1				1		
Carpenter	3		1		2		
Cotton Gin Foreman	1				1		
Custodian	1				1		
Finance Company Representative	1					1	
Tool Dresser	1						
Salesman (Construction)	1				1		
Cost Clerk	1				1		
Tellergrapher	1				1		
Warehouse Man	1				1		
Electronics Computer Program	1				1		1
Clerk Gas Company	1				1		
Teacher	1						
Hardware Store Clerk	1				1		
Totals	75	5 (6.6%)	7 (9.3%)	2 (2.6%)	46 (61.2%)	6 (8%)	9 (12%)

Table 4. Vocational Agriculture instruction which has been of least help since graduation from high school.

Occupations	: :Number in :Occupation:	: :Livestock :Production: :Systems:	: :Supervised :Farming :Mechanics:	: :Cropping: :Systems: :in FFA :Work	: :Farm :ation :in FFA :Work	: :Livestock :Production: :in FFA :Work
Farming	22	4	1	6	1	5
Related Occupations	2				1	1
College Student	12	4	3	2	1	2
Armed Forces	9	2	3		1	3
Service Station						
Attendant	3			1		2
Company Maintenance						
Man	2	1		1		1
Engineer	3	1	1			1
Mechanic	4			3		1
Merchant	2			1		1
Contractor	1					1
Carpenter	3	1				1
Cotton Gin Foreman	1					1
Custodian	1					1
Finance Company						
Representative	1				1	1
Tool Dresser	1					1
Salesman						
(Construction)	1					1
Cost Clerk	1					1
Telegrapher	1			1		1
Warehouse Man	1					1
Electronics Computer						
Programmer	1			1		1
Clerk Gas Company	1				1	1
Teacher	1					
Hardware Store Clerk	1					1
Totals	75	13(17.3%)	8(10.6%)	16(21.3%)	4(5.3%)	13(17.3%)
						21(28)

or 5.3 per cent thought that Farm Mechanics had been of the least help to them. Thirteen or 17.3 per cent thought that their participation in IFA had been of the least help to them. While 21, or 23 per cent thought that livestock judging instruction had been of the least help to them.

It was also noted¹ that as both age became older and income became higher, that the per cent of individuals in each group who were married, increased. In the \$3,000 or less group only 8.9 per cent were married. While in the \$7,500 or more group 100 per cent were married. The exception in this increase was, the \$4,500 to \$6,000 group showed 93.8 per cent married while the \$6,000 to \$7,500 group showed only 75 per cent married.

These findings seem to compare rather closely with Bradley's² findings which showed:

9.8 per cent as many married students as single ones attending college, while conversely, over twice as many married graduates were in farm related occupations and approximately three times more married graduates in non-farm related occupations as compared to single graduates.

It was also noted by the writer that Smothers³ found that 48 per cent of vocational agriculture graduates were in agricultural occupations while the writer found⁴ that 45.3 per cent

¹Table 1.

²H. R. Bradley, "Occupational Status of the 1959 Kansas High School Graduates Majoring in Vocational Agriculture," 2nd phase of a continuing 8-year study, Department of Education, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, 1961.

³Smothers, Loc. Cit.

⁴Table 2.

of his former students were either farming or in related occupations. It would appear that this 45.3 per cent will be raised as the young men finish college and their military service.

It was noted that a large part, 61.2 per cent, of the former students thought that their instruction in farm mechanics had been of the most value to them since leaving school.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It has been noted that 16 or 69.9 per cent of the people who fell into the \$3,000 or less income bracket were either enrolled in college or in the Armed Forces. This would suggest that when these people terminate either their college or Armed Forces careers, that at least some of them will enter into the occupation of farming or some related field.

The writer based this conclusion on the number 8 question on the questionnaire¹ which reads "If not farming at present do you intend to farm in the future?" Of the 23 individuals which were in the armed forces or college, 14 answered yes to this question while 8 answered no, and one undecided.

It was noted with one exception, that as the age went up, or the group became more mature their income increased. This one exception was the \$3,000 to \$4,500 group which averaged 25.5 years of age while the \$4,500 to \$6,000 income group averaged 22.9 years of age.

¹See Appendix - page 24.

It was also noted that of the six individuals who checked participation in F.F.A. as being the most valuable area of instruction to them since leaving high school, two were farming and the other four were in some occupation which dealt more extensively with the public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The writer recommended that follow-up studies of this nature be delayed at least six years until after the time the student graduates or leaves high school. This then tends to allow these individuals some time to enter upon an occupation. In this study the writer encountered the fact that a relatively large number of the former students were either in college or the armed forces.

The writer further recommended that the open ended brackets in the income table be so devised that an average income could be determined for each group. This would make possible the construction of a very interesting table dealing with marital status, average age, occupation, and average income.

The writer recommended that, at least in the near future, the vocational agriculture program in Lakin follow the recommendations of the State Department of Vocational Education; with particular emphasis given to maintaining a high level of instruction in the area of farm mechanics.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to acknowledge the advice and council of Dr. R. J. Agan, Head Teacher Trainer, Agriculture Education, Department of Education, Kansas State University; and, Dr. Russell Drumwright for the knowledge he managed to impart to the writer in the Research Methods Course. He also wishes to express his appreciation to all those former students who made this study possible by returning their questionnaires. Last but not least he wishes to thank Mrs. Wanda Coder, his typist.

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APPENDIX

Dear

I am writing a report to fulfill part of the requirements for my Master of Science Degree at Kansas State University.

This report will consist of a follow-up study on people who completed one or more years of Vocational Agriculture in Lakin Rural High School during the ten year period, 1950 to 1960.

The personal information asked on this questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential and used only as a part of the summary results.

A copy of the result of this survey will be made available to all who co-operate in making the study possible.

Thank you.

Respectfully yours,

Enc.

- Number _____
1. Age _____
 2. Marital Status (check one)
 Single _____
 Married _____
 3. Number of Children _____
 4. Occupation: (check one)
 - (a) Farming (includes farm hand) _____
 - (b) Related occupation (County Agent, Soil Conservation, Etc;) _____
 - (c) Merchant _____
 - (d) Contractor _____
 - (e) Welder _____
 - (f) Carpenter _____
 - (g) Mechanic _____
 - (h) Armed Forces _____
 - (i) College Student _____
 - (j) Trade School Student _____
 - (k) Other _____
 If other, please specify: _____

 5. Do Parents or Guardian farm? (check one)
 - Yes _____
 - No _____
 6. Number of brothers _____
 7. Number of sisters _____
 8. If not farming at present, do you intend to farm in the future? _____
 9. What one part of the Vocational Agriculture curriculum do you believe to have been of the most help to you since your graduation from high school? (check one)
 - (a) Study of Livestock Production Systems _____
 - (b) Supervised Farming _____
 - (c) Study of Cropping Systems _____
 - (d) The Farm Mechanics Program _____
 - (e) Participation in F. F. A. _____
 - (f) Livestock Judging Work _____
 10. What one part of the Vocational Agriculture curriculum do you believe to have been the least help to you since your graduation from high school? (check one)
 - (a) Study of Livestock Production Systems _____
 - (b) Supervised Farming _____
 - (c) Study of Cropping Systems _____
 - (d) The Farm Mechanics Program _____
 - (e) Participation in F. F. A. _____
 - (f) Livestock Judging Work _____
 11. Estimate of annual income for 1960 (check one)
 - (a) \$3,000 or less _____
 - (b) \$3,000 to \$4,500 _____
 - (c) \$4,500 to \$6,000 _____
 - (d) \$6,000 to \$7,500 _____
 - (e) \$7,500 or more _____

Dear _____:

Some time ago I mailed you a questionnaire. Apparently it has been mislaid and slipped your mind.

Enclosed you will find another copy of that questionnaire. I would certainly appreciate it very much if you would fill out the questionnaire and return it to me in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you.

Respectfully yours,

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF FORMER LAKIN
RURAL HIGH SCHOOL VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE STUDENTS

by

CHARLES DEAN HOPPAS

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

Department of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1961

The purpose of this study was to determine the present occupational status of students of Lakin Rural High School who had taken one or more years of vocational agriculture during the years 1950 to 1960 inclusive. The study was also designed to yield information about the financial status of the former students. The study further attempted to learn which areas of vocational agriculture instruction had proven to be the most valuable, and the least valuable to the students since leaving high school.

Questionnaires along with cover letters and stamped self-addressed envelopes were mailed to all former students who had been enrolled one or more years in the Lakin Vocational Agriculture Department. Four of the former students were deceased and one was an inmate of an institution and unable to be contacted by mail.

Four of the letters were returned because of incorrect address. A seventy-two per cent return was attained from the initial mailing. Upon initiating a follow-up on the questionnaires 88.37 per cent return was attained.

The return revealed the following:

1. Sixty-nine and nine tenths per cent of the people who were making \$3,000 or less, were either enrolled in college or were in the Armed Forces.
2. Forty-five and three tenths per cent of the individuals, concerned in this study, were engaged in either farming or related fields.
3. Sixty and nine tenths per cent of those in college and the armed forces intended to engage in farming as a career.

4. The 45.3 per cent now engaged in farming, coupled with 30.9 per cent of those in college and the armed forces intending to farm, was similar to the findings of Smothers. In 1931 Smothers found in an Iowa study that 48 per cent of Vocational Agriculture graduates went into some phase of agriculture.
5. Sixty-six and sixty-six hundredths per cent of the people who thought FFA participation had been more valuable to them than any other phase of Vocational Agriculture, were engaged in some occupation which had extensive contact with the public.
6. Thirty-two per cent of the people, studied were in the \$3,000 or under income bracket. Twenty-eight per cent in the \$3,000 to \$4,500 bracket; 20 per cent in the \$4,500 to \$6,000 bracket; 10.66 per cent in the \$6,000 to \$7,500 bracket and 9.32 per cent in the above \$7,500 bracket.