AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
http://ageconsearch.umn.edu
aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

Staff Papers

Staff Paper 71 July, 1978

YOUTH EXTENSION PROGRAMS: A JOINT BUSINESS AND LAND GRANT UNIVERSITY APPROACH

Steven K. Riggins

Department of Agricultural Economics

GIANNINI FOUNDATION OF
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
LIBRARY
AUG 31 1978
WITHDRAWN

University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture
Lexington 40506

Staff Paper 71 July, 1978

YOUTH EXTENSION PROGRAMS: A JOINT BUSINESS AND LAND GRANT UNIVERSITY APPROACH

Steven K. Riggins

AAEA paper, Blacksburg VA, Aug. 6-10, 1978

ABSTRACT

Youth Extension Programs: A Joint Business and Land Grant University Approach

Steven K. Riggins

This paper reports on a joint business-Agricultural Economics Department extension program for youth carried out by the University of Kentucky and the Kentucky Council of Cooperatives. This paper concludes that the benefits to the department easily exceed the effort required and that relevant joint programs are alive and well.

YOUTH EXTENSION PROGRAMS: A JOINT BUSINESS AND LAND GRANT UNIVERSITY APPROACH

Steven K. Riggins

Recently several articles have appeared concerning Agricultural Economics Departments and the business community. These articles have ranged from discussions concerning the relevancy of university research and extension programs to agribusiness firm's needs (Scroggs) to articles reporting the results of joint agribusiness-university research (Robbins). Other articles in this vein, but oriented toward teaching, include Snodgrass and Devino. Snodgrass documents the widespread practice of off-campus work-study programs currently offered by several Agricultural Economics Departments and various business concerns, at the undergraduate level. Devino reports on a similar program now available at the master's level.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss an extension program for high school juniors and seniors carried out jointly by the Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Kentucky, State Cooperative Extension Service and the Kentucky Council of Cooperatives.

Traditionally Agricultural Economics Departments have had little involvement with youth oriented extension programs. This function was left to the state 4-H staff, who frequently utilized the talents of professionals in other School of Agriculture departments such as Animal Science, Agronomy, Entomology and Forestry. However, the Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Kentucky has developed an extension program for youth.

Scope of the Program

The primary program objectives are:

1. To increase participants' knowledge of the American Economic System by individual and group study.
2. To help participants take an active role in business through involvement with business leaders.
3. To exchange ideas between young people and local business and professional leaders.
4. To acquaint young people with career opportunities in business.
5. To provide leadership training for young people as they serve as officers and committee members in local programs, area programs and state and national programs.

A complete set of resource materials has been developed to aid in the accomplishment of the above objectives. These materials cover such topics as the advantages of organized groups activity, the macro aspects of the U.S. economy, what our economy provides, how it fits together and the relationship of government to private business. Also covered in some detail are the various forms of organized business activity including individually owned business, partnership, ordinary business corporation and the cooperative business corporation.

One strength of this program derives from the delivery technique, which is also related to the program's funding. The Kentucky Council of Cooperatives, representing approximately 130 of the State's cooperatives, is the major financial sponsor for the State-level program. Current funding is around $12,000 per year. In addition, the costs of running the local county programs are paid by local businesses. In 1977-78,

roughly 50 counties held programs with a local cost ranging from $500.-$1,000. This level of financial support is indicative of the commitment to the program by the cooperatives and other business concerns in the State of Kentucky. However, a greater commitment is made by these organizations in terms of time spent as instructors at the local and state programs. It is the personal instruction of local youth by local businessmen, educators, lawyers and accountants that is the heart of this extension effort. This effort is further strengthened by the assistance of the county 4-H youth agent. The 4-H agent assists in the development of a local program and serves as a liaison with the Department of Agricultural Economics.

Sequence of Events

In September of each year the youth program is highly publicized throughout the State. The Kentucky Council of Cooperatives notifies all of their members about the program and invites them to send interested adults to the leader training sessions, held in October at strategic locations across Kentucky. The State Cooperative Extension Service also notifies all of the county extension offices of the leader training workshops. A final technique used to advertise the program is the highly visible "kickoff-breakfast," on the first Monday in October, with the Governor of the State of Kentucky. The Governor and Directors of the Kentucky Council of Cooperatives take this opportunity to personally congratulate the top students from the previous year's program.

The leader training sessions in October are used to familiarize 4-H leaders, businessmen and other interested adults with the program's

resource materials made available by the Agricultural Economics Department. These workshops are also used as a means for experienced leaders in the program to pass on to new leaders their ideas and experiences on how to best run and organize a local program. This may include ideas on how to obtain the necessary funding and local adult instructors to ideas on special topics and activities covered in a local program.

This free exchange of ideas among program leaders has proved to be a valuable aspect of the extension program. The Agricultural Economics Department develops the central core materials, general economic, business management and marketing information, and then encourages the local program leaders and instructors to develop additional programming based on local interests and local expertise. Local adaptations have most often dealt with more topics on career opportunities. Frequently, local programs have been able to provide their top students some summer job experience, thus further facilitating career selection by students. Finally, the suggestions for programming changes, either changes in materials, structure or delivery of the program, are accumulated and presented to the State youth committee for evaluation. This committee, having complete control of the program, has representatives from the Kentucky Council of Cooperatives, the Kentucky High School Administration Association, the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, State level 4-H staff and the University of Kentucky Department of Agricultural Economics.

Local programs are held from November to May each year. Once the program leaders and 4-H youth agents are brought up-to-date on the materials at the training workshops they return to their counties and initiate the local programs. Key first steps include the recruiting of

a program committee and some of last year's top students (high school seniors referred to as Junior Leaders). It is possible, using these two groups, to develop a strong program without overworking the leader or the 4-H youth agent. Some of the major tasks the committee performs include meeting facility acquisition and funding for refreshments, awards and perhaps a banquet dinner. The committee can also assist in the recruiting of local businessmen and other professionals to serve as instructors. The committee also assists in promoting community awareness so that interested students will participate.

The number of students in a local program vary, depending mainly on the time frame adopted for the program. Initially, this program was set up to run 9-10 weeks with one meeting, of 1-2 hours duration, per week. The ideal number of students for a program of this time frame appears to be around 25. Student numbers greater than 25 resulted in more schedule conflicts and higher drop out rates, while numbers less than 25 created difficulties for recruiting local business and professional instructors as well as funding difficulties.

Difficulties such as these have caused the program to evolve to the point where most local programs now run what is termed a 3-day "Impact Program". The basic materials are changed very little in comparison to the traditional program, they are simply presented in a more intensive fashion.

Impact programs easily adapt to handling larger numbers than the traditional program. Currently, some Impact programs have successfully enrolled and completed 75 students. With programs this large local leaders have had little difficulty obtaining permission from high school

administrators to allow their students to participate in these all day sessions. With numbers of this size it is also frequently possible to obtain the use of regional college or university facilities and faculty for the program, in these situations high school support is further enhanced. The larger numbers are also conducive to stronger funding support and instructor support. Additionally, the number of instructors needed for the Impact program may be less than for a traditional program because one individual may be able to cover multiple topics.

Whether the program is traditional or Impact in nature, the students are usually exposed to the same evaluation procedures. Evaluations include a series of seven mini-quizzes, covering the core topics, and a final written comprehensive exam. The best performers in total, are normally awarded expense paid trips to attend the State Seminar held in June each year on the University of Kentucky campus. In fact, some local programs also award college scholarships to their top 2-3 individuals. In addition, many local programs elect to award small cash prizes to the individual high scorer on each of the mini-quizzes.

The State Seminar normally draws approximately 250 of the top students from across the state each year. The actual number eligible to attend is based on the number of local programs held and the number of students successfully completing each local program. Thus a small incentive aspect is introduced. The same approach is used to determine how many Junior Leaders a local program may send to the State Seminar. The following rules apply:

Local Program	Youth Seminar
if 10 to 14 complete program	3 eligible to attend Seminar
if 15 to 19 complete program	4 eligible to attend Seminar

Local Program--continued	Youth Seminar--continued
if 20 to 24 complete program	5 eligible to attend Seminar
if 25 to 29 complete program	6 eligible to attend Seminar
if 30 or more complete program	7 eligible to attend Seminar

One JUNIOR LEADER per local program is eligible to be a Junior Leader at the Youth Seminar. If 25 or more complete the local program, two Junior Leaders are eligible to participate in the Youth Seminar.

Even though students attending the State Seminar have their costs covered by the local program they are personally required to pay an additional $5.00 registration fee. All monies received in this fashion are awarded as cash prizes during the program. The youth committee's philosophy is that the cash awards to the top performing management teams are a realistic first-hand example of the American economic system and thus is a valuable part of the State Seminar program's teaching function.

The State Seminar can be broken into four major components or learning environments. The first component is based on students learning from being members of either a regular corporation or a cooperative corporation's board of directors. Each State Seminar student is mailed a complete notebook of materials covering his company 2-3 weeks before arriving on campus. This materials provides board assignments,a series of up-to-date financial records, the articles of incorporation, bylaws, policy manual and other relevant company facts. Material explaining the financial statements, the operation of a corporation and how boards of directors and company officers should function are included to aid the student. The first day on campus, the seminar faculty assemble the

students into their respective boards and give additional instruction, in a question and answer environment. The sminar faculty are composed of top business men, professionals and university faculty. At the conclusion of this instructional period, late afternoon, the boards are each given two realistic case problems to solve as a board of directors. These cases, which must be turned in by 8:00 a.m. of the second day, are graded by the seminar faculty. Throughout the second and third day, interspersed among written exams and guest speakers, the seminar faculty will call on 2-3 boards to report on each of the assigned cases. Each seminar faculty awards a specified amount of money to the top 2-3 board teams on each case. Each board in turn, decides how the money should be split among its individual members.

The second and third learning environments at the State Seminar are guest speakers and formal written exams. The exams are of two types. The first one, on the second day, is taken as a corporate board. This occurs immediately after the students have turned in their board determined solutions to their respective cases. This training in making group decisions is viewed as an integral part of the teaching process. The second and final exam is given on the morning of the last day. It is a comprehensive exam given to each student. Its primary purpose is to reinforce presented material and to help determine the top students who will receive scholarships.

Guest speakers also enhance the learning atmosphere. Normally 5-6 guest speakers are recruited each year. These people come primarily from the business and government communities. They are encouraged to speak on topics of current interest with particular reference to how

these topics relate to running a business or how it will affect life in general. These talks are always followed by vigorous discussion sessions between the students and the speaker. Last year topics covered ranged from "Women in Business" to "The Impact of Energy on the U.S. Economy".

The final learning component relates to the Junior Leaders. Each year a limited number of top Junior Leaders from local programs (Junior Leaders were students the prior year and are thus familiar with all aspects of the program) attend the State Seminar to assist with the program. Junior Leaders serve as special advisors to the several boards of directors, they attend special advanced training sessions on finance, stock and credit markets and computer technology. In addition, Junior Leaders are responsible for chairing all general sessions, and dinners and introducing all speakers. In total these activities are valuable learning experiences and they complement the learning environment for the regular students at the seminar.

The final State Seminar activity is the awarding of college scholarships to the top 14 students. These same students are also given free trips to the annual meeting of the American Institute of Cooperation for added training.

Summary and Conclusions

Recently papers have been written concerning the degree of relevancy of the research, teaching and extension efforts of Agricultural Economics Departments in general. Others have expressed this same thought by speaking of the isolationists as well as ivory-tower attitudes of many departments.

This paper reports on one effort directly counter to those fears. A joint business-land grant university extension program is discussed. It is a program that has been run successfully for several years by the Kentucky Council of Cooperatives, the Kentucky State 4-H Staff and the University of Kentucky Department of Agricultural Economics.

The program is of benefit to all concerned. A number of Kentucky's young people have received a rounded educational experience as a result of this program. The 4-H Staff, Cooperative Extension Service, Kentucky Council of Cooperatives, University of Kentucky and the Department of Agricultural Economics all enjoy a more favorable public image as a result of this joint extension effort.

Some particular benefits to the Agricultural Economics Department have come about from working with this program. They include input from interested businessmen and professionals into the teaching program at the undergraduate level. It has also facilitated some research funding and cooperation between the department and agricultural cooperatives. Finally, the Agricultural Economics Department's participation has led to other expanded extension opprotunities for the department with Kentucky's cooperatives. The program has proven to be well worth the departmental effort invested and it is one more example of realism and practical application within the profession.

References

Devino, Gary T., "A Pilot University-Industry Master's Training Program." Amer. J. Agr. Econ. 59(1977): 580-582.

Robbins, Lynn W., Stephen B. Harsh, and John W. Allen. "Enhancing Mutual Benefits from Firm-Level Research Efforts." Amer. J. Agr. Econ. 59(1977): 583-586

Scroggs, Claud L., "The Relevance of University Research and Extension Activities in Agricultural Economics to Agribusiness Firms." Amer. J. Agr. Econ. 57(1975): 883-888.

Snodgrass, Milton M., "Off-Campus Work and Study Experience Programs for Undergraduate Students in Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Business Management." Amer. J. Agr. Econ. 56(1974): 1153-1162.