

WAAE 2009-2010 Winter Newsletter

Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators

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Important:

- 2010 PDC will be held June 28-July 1 at the Marriott Madison West in Middleton, WI. Conference registration will open March 1st. Registration will remain at \$380 and includes meals, materials, and facility fees. Room reservations can be made directly at the Marriott Madison West by calling 608-831-2000.
- 2011 PDC will be held June 27-30 at the KI Center in Green Bay, WI

National Teach Ag. Day By Jeff Zobeck, WAAE President

By now some of you have probably already heard about the National Teach Ag. Day on February 25, 2010. If you either have or have not heard about it here are a few details that you may find helpful in celebrating this first annual event.

The first thing I would recommend is for you to check out the link below for more information and resources to help you promote and plan for this day. They will be adding more things to this site as they develop and the date approaches. While attending the national conference in Nashville I attended a workshop regarding this event and one thing they are still looking to add is a short video. So check the website out and get up to speed on some of the possibilities for you on a local level. The link is:

<http://www.naae.org/teachag/teachagday>

At the state level some of the WAAE board members have started putting together some ideas for activities on the state level to help promote this special day. We will be continuing to work on these ideas at our next meeting in January and will keep everyone posted through the website and through emails when the time is appropriate. Some of the ideas discussed include:

- A) Encouraging all ag. teachers in the state to show the video that NAAE is developing to your classes that day to spark a conversation or get students talking about the possibility of becoming an ag. teacher.
- B) Development of a program in which students interested in teaching ag. teach a short lesson about agriculture at the elementary or middle school level. We would then look for the ag. teachers or students to report these minutes of teaching to us with a goal of minutes taught in honor of this day. Maybe the goal would be 10,000 minutes for the state so it would be a 10,000 minute challenge. Details are still be worked out on this and we will keep you posted.
- C) Another idea was for either job shadowing or student shadowing taking place. Either an interested student would shadow a teacher from their area or even a current Agricultural Education major at one of the universities for the day. Expectations for this are currently being developed and we should know more following our board meeting in early January.

With all of these ideas we are looking for ways to tie in the State FFA Officers with their blogs as well as the universities if possible. The State FFA website should have a TAG link as well to get to the site mentioned above. State FFA President, BJ Chrisler, has even offered to have the state officers produce a video as well to add to their collection for the year as a possibility for us to use to make the day a big success. We encourage your input if you have any. Let me know at zobeckj@gresham.k12.wi.us if you have any other ideas, suggestions for the ideas outlined above or questions regarding the National Teach Ag. Day.

Many years Late--but Better than Never by Chuck Rasmussen

In my 32 years of teaching I finally took the opportunity and attended the NAAE national convention. Even as I was boarding the plane in Dubuque I was wondering why I am doing this-----with a fairly large remodeling project going on at home, missing the opening day of deer season for only the second time since I was 12 and the extra work of preparing to go and catching up when I get home would this convention be worth it ? Without question the answer was YES. It was great to see so many of our own honored as Regional winners---Adam Wehling -Outstanding Young Member, Tim Heeg and Mark Zee -Outstanding Middle /Secondary School Program, Tracy Harper ,Warren Pickar and Pete Bemis (not able to attend--someone had to work!) representing Western Wisconsin Technical College ,Michelle Meier and Stacy Skemp as Turn the Key winners and especially great to see Dick Aide as being selected to receive our regions Outstanding Service Citation. I truly believe that some other states have to be jealous of what we have here in Wisconsin. I sat in on several excellent workshops including Candice Olson's "Going Bananas over Food Safety ". Lisa Konkell and Rick Henningfeld also presented a "A Ready to Use Exploratory Biotechnology Curriculum ".The ACTE Career Tech Expo was also excellent. Jeff Zobeck's "Hillbilly Tour of Nashville" was Great and The Radio City Rockettes Christmas Show did not disappoint either. I highly recommend that every Ag. Ed teacher take in the conference sometime in their career and probably sooner than I did. Incidentally I was able to shoot a nice 10 pointer on Sunday morning to finish off a great week

The Financial Status of the NAAE By Glenda Crook

Due to the condition of our economy, although after fighting the crowds on Black Friday not so sure there is a crisis, I thought some members may be interested in the financial status of the NAAE organization. The financial committee members reviewed the financial statements for NAAE and the proposed budget for 2009-2010. The key points noted included; a large loss in investments due to the economy, changes in items budgeted from last year to this year, and missing information not provided in the budget. In addition discussion was held about NAAE programs that we continue to fund.

The most obvious change to the NAAE financial statement was a \$123,524 loss due to the down turn in the economy. This is a loss that is beyond anyone's control and did not warrant much discussion. It is an unfortunate loss, however according to Jay Jackman almost half of this money, about \$60,000, has already been regenerated since its loss.

The itemized budget brought about some questions in regards to varying amounts of funds assigned to specific items from year to year. It seemed that some items were budgeted for a lesser amount for the proposed budget than they were for the current budget. This didn't make sense taking into consideration that expenses continue to increase. It was explained that the items in question were award areas, which the expenses vary quite a bit from year to year based on where the convention is held and how many winners attend. The committee members also noted that no notation was made of the new position for the Teach Agriculture, TAG program. The new position was initiated on a grant; however the grant was not shown as income nor was the salary for the position shown on the budget. It was recommended that all monetary income and expenses be shown on the documents shared with the committee so all information is disclosed. In light of recent events related to monetary funds and the recommendations for the National FFA Foundation Board of Trustees the finance committee would like all information disclosed for evaluation by our members.

As a reminder to our WAAE members the NAAE Agricultural Educator Relief Fund, established after Hurricane Katrina for the ag teachers in Louisiana, is still accepting donations. Wisconsin has made a \$1000 donation in 2007 and \$34 in 2008. WAAE members may want to consider donating additional funds to this account in the near future. This fund is available to all agriculture teachers that may be in need of assistance due to a disaster, accident or injury. The NAAE is also still interested in funding the Ag Ed Opportunities Fund and made contributions in 2007 and 2008 of \$15,000 and \$10,000 respectively. No monies were distributed to the fund this year.

On a final note the committee recognized that our sponsorship had not been cut even with the state of the economy. The committee chair, Greg Curlin explained that even though our sponsors had cut all other donations and sponsorships they chose to continue to support NAAE, because of the many thank you letters they received from the members of our organization. This truly shows the important impact a simple thank you

note can have on our sponsors. Please take the time to make sure they know how much you appreciate their support and recognition. Considering the state of the economy and the situation some of the other organizations have found themselves in this past year, NAAE is in a pretty sound financial state.

Where's Waldo By David Laatsch, Past President

My oldest son was big into “Waldo” when he was a youngster! This cartoon character of is a guy with black glasses, red striped shirt, hat and blue pants, who is carefully inserted into a crowd of thousands of Waldo look-alikes. The object is to find the real Waldo in the large poster.

By early December, the school year starts to feel like the Waldo poster. There are thousands of things to do and no time to find the real prize.

As busy as the school year is, I have found that the NAAE/ACTE National Convention is a great break from the routine. As difficult as it is to make sub plans, as challenging as it is to be away from home, the convention has provided me with some great memories in my career.

I am pleased to report that the Wisconsin delegation was again this year, among the largest to attend. Enhanced with award winners, committee members and state leaders, our Wisconsin delegates are making an impact on the national organization. Like our own Professional Development Conference, the workshops are educational and very popular. The keynote speakers are incredibly motivational and the business sessions are informative and valuable—especially after attending a couple of conferences and understanding the flow of the business.

“But how can I afford the cost of attending?” Yes, a national conference is expensive and I know that many districts have restrictions on attendance. WAAE does provide a stipend for members to attend (it doesn't cover all of the expense—but it helps.) WAAE also provides a stipend for board members to attend. National Award Winners expenses are sponsored (and Wisconsin does well in awards.) Besides internal financial support, school districts are much more receptive to sending you, if you are on a national committee or a workshop presenter. So this gives you additional reason to get involved in Region III activities.

I believe that WAAE is a “value added” investment. Attending a national convention is a benefit that you will appreciate over a lifetime. So take a break from the daily search for Waldo amongst the repetitive routine of the school year. Make it a goal for next year to attend the conference in Las Vegas. Sunny seventy degrees and a rewarding conference will make you a more satisfied person and a better teacher.

To Grow, or Not to Grow by Troy Talford

Many times I am asked why I choose to participate in NAAE's Region III Conference and National Conventions. The answers to these questions are quite simple; I participate in these experiences because of the professional development opportunities that are available. Each year I am amazed at the professional development workshops that are available to us as agricultural educators, and this year's workshops helped me out professionally. The workshop I wish to highlight is a great example of how working with business professionals can help improve your program. “Navigating the Unknown: How to Properly Use and Maintain Greenhouses” was the title of the workshop put on by James Young and Andy McNitt of Hummert International. I have been operating a greenhouse for three years now and feel that I know enough to get me by, but I know that there is so much more that I didn't know. This workshop helped show us not so much how to get a greenhouse up and running, but more about how to maintain this major investment. There are so many controls and so many ideas on what should be done in a greenhouse, but James and Andy broke it down to what they feel will be helpful. Obviously cost is a major issue when it comes to maintaining a greenhouse and these two gentleman provided us educators with many options to keep these maintenance issues within our budgets. Topics of discussion included electronic control systems, pest management, algae growth, and many other basic control mechanisms. Walking out of this workshop, I found myself more charged with maintaining a greenhouse than I ever dreamt possible. So, when a teacher asks me the question as to why I attend these conferences and conventions I hope that they realize the potential for professional growth. I know we are all very busy as agriculture educators, but investing our time in these conferences will pay back in the long run by giving us tools that will allow us to be much more efficient with our local program.

Edutainment: How to Incorporate Engaging Video Clips into the Agricultural Education Curriculum by Tracy M Harper

Did you know that agriculture is a 'dirty job', and a 'modern marvel'? We all aim to entertain our students, keep them engaged and interested in our classrooms. Encouraging students to take an active role in their education can be challenging. However, when you combine humor with knowledge....the results can be exciting.

There are several TV programs that offer both entertainment, and education. One of my students favorites is the Discover program 'Dirty Jobs' with Mike Rowe, several episodes have been devoted to the many dirty jobs on the farm. Everything from inseminating cattle to sexing baby chicks! Additional programs that offer both entertainment and education include: Modern Marvels, How it's Made, UnWrapped and many RFDTV shows. By heading to the show's website, you can download video's for your classroom, you can also set your DVR to record the shows on to a DVD for use. You can also purchase season disc sets for a reasonable price.

Another option is to 'surf' You Tube for video's that relate to the topic's you are teaching. You can email the video links to yourself, or download the video. There are several options for converting YouTube video into format's that play well on your computer; www.vixey.net and savevid.com. By converting the video's to a .mp4 or .avi file, the video will play without pauses. The speaker Gaea Wimmer also presented two curriculums, one on horses and the other on swine that used hyperlinks in the powerpoints to access relevant videos. To check out her curriculums go to www.webpages.ttu.edu/gwimmer/naae.

With a little surfing time on the web, you can include video's that both entertain and educate students. It can be very effective in engaging our students in discussion, and ultimately engage students in their education.

Advocacy...It Never Goes Out of Style – Paul Larson, Freedom High School

When I hear the word advocacy, I automatically think of relationships and building connections to my program. Hopefully this is the same thought you have when you hear advocacy as well. The problem with advocacy is that it is a task that can never be crossed off our to do list. We continually have new board members, new elected town, state, and national representatives, so our effort on educating them about the importance and function of our program never ends. Just when we have a solid relationship with one of our elected officials, they are defeated in the next election or decide not to run again. That is why staying diligent and focused is more important with advocacy than with anything else we do. If we have articles for the local newspaper, remember to send them to your elected officials. If your students perform well in a contest or competition, tell people.

The message is clear, you must tell your story or no one else will. Most of us do not have media calling us after district contest asking how our teams or members did. If we were a basketball team or volleyball team, we might very well receive a phone call asking for a score. So, we must advocate for ourselves. I will state it again, we must advocate for ourselves. Get to know you local, state, and national representatives. Send them electronic versions of your articles, just like you send them to the newspaper. Tell them your good news. When we do this, we are helping keep them informed and let them know that our program is important and vital in our community. Elected officials care most about votes and money. If you cannot afford to donate money to campaigns, then you should be sure you talk to them about how important issues affect you and your students. As a person with a vote, you have their attention.

One current issue to mention on your next e-mail would be the FFA Commemorative Coin Act. You can access information from the NAAE website and by utilizing the CapWiz system. Simple enter your zip code, select National, hit next step, select the FFA Commemorative Coin letter, type in a line or two in the editable text box, enter sender information, click send message. Your voice and opinion is on its way to Washington, DC. Please take a couple of minutes and send a note to your federal representatives today. Keep talking, working, and educating because Advocacy...never goes out of style.

NAAE Awards Luncheon by Dick Aide

The awards luncheon was held on Friday, November 20th at the Opryland Hotel Convention Center in Nashville. The program was conducted by Ray Nash, NAAE President Elect and the luncheon sponsor was CEV Multimedia, represented by Gordon Davis. Dr. Brenda Dann-Meissier, Assistant Secretary from the Office of Vocational and Adult Education brought remarks to the group. Outstanding Service Citations, Outstanding Cooperation, and Lifetime Achievement awards were presented. Further remarks were shared by Dr. Kim May of the American Veterinary Medical Association, Robyn Nick of Horizon Organic, and Nancy Trivette of the National Council for Agricultural Education. The luncheon program concluded with remarks from the NAAE President-Elect candidate.

Making Three Minutes Count by Laura Hasselquist

Three minutes, that's how long the average student talks about curriculum a day. Not just one subject area or one class period, but all their courses combined account for those three minutes. A little surprising, isn't it? While at NAAE I had the opportunity to attend a great workshop about how to increase students' understanding and knowledge with simple techniques that have been proven effective over and over again. The most successful strategy to increase students' percentile gain by a whopping 45% was to identify similarities and differences in the new concept. Those comparisons are most successful when made between the new material and something students are already comfortable with. Summarizing and note taking was another area that greatly benefitted students. The presenter reminded us that the students don't have to keep taking notes from the teacher. Why not give them a portion of information to cover and have them create posters containing the vital information? Students learning from each other is an excellent way to promote a positive classroom environment. Reinforcing effort and providing recognition rounded out the top three for being the most successful strategies. As teachers, we all know the power of a positive word, so use those words more often!

Besides the top three, there are six other simple methods to help students retain information. Homework and practice, nonlinguistic representations (pictures), and cooperative learning are all tools that teachers use every day to help their students. Some of them take more time and effort on the teacher's part, but when used correctly, students learn so much more. Stating your objectives and providing feedback increases student learning by 23%! What a simple way to help students be successful. Generating and testing hypotheses along with providing students with questions, cues, and graphic organizers are two other ways to increase student retention by over 20%.

I know many of us already use these strategies, but it's always good to get a reminder of what really works. As we head into the spring semester, try something new or brush up on a strategy that you may have gone away from using, and make the most of your students' three minutes.

I don't have time...you need to make time for the professional choice...

by Mark Zimmermann

It may be difficult to get the permission granted, it may be challenging to come up with adequate funding and then just before you go—those sub plans! An agricultural education professional has a great deal to gain by participating in professional development opportunities like the NAAE Convention. I began attending a few years ago to accept an award for our Ag Ed program. I have attended two more times since. Each time I attend, I have gained new experiences—this time was no different. The opening ACTE session speaker, Chef Jeff Henderson shared a great life story and told how finding a passion and pursuing it can lead to great success. The wide array of workshops offered by the NAAE Convention and ACTE Convention will leave you full of curriculum activities, great ideas and learning the hottest issues on in Ag Ed on a national scope. Wisconsin needs to applaud some of Wisconsin's best for being featured workshop presenters—Lisa Konkell and Rick Henningfeld. They provided an awesome workshop on biotechnology. The ACTE exhibits highlighted many companies latest educational technologies. In the awards arena, Wisconsin could hardly be more proud! With Regional winners Outstanding Young Member, Adam Wehling, Outstanding Secondary Program, Marshfield High School and Outstanding Post Secondary Program of WWTC, Lifetime Achievement Award for Dick Aide

and Outstanding Mentor, Rachel Sauvola—applause to them all! Finally, by attending with other Ag Ed professionals, you can't help but to spend some quality time with some really quality people. I always enjoy the time I spend with such outstanding Ag Ed professionals from Wisconsin. Whether it is participating in a workshop with others, having a rich over dinner conversation or having some fun during free time—the experience is full of enthusiasm for our chosen career and providing the best for our students. Through the wide variety of participation, one can't help but get refreshed and fulfilled. I challenge you to consider making the professional choice and attending a NAAE/ACTE Convention and see why we go through the effort to attend and why we are so excited to attend convention!

Need help...go to the C.o.P. By: Marty Nowak

A couple of years ago, when I attended the NAAE/ACTE Conference in Las Vegas, NAAE had just begun to pilot the Communities of Practice (CoP). It was the initial sign up for the program and there really were not that many communities set up. Now, there are many communities with many lesson plans, Powerpoints, and teaching ideas.

Looking on the AgEd Listserve, I see many teachers asking for ideas, worksheets and curriculum for their classes. Many times, people ask for something that had been asked for a week or two prior. An advantage of CoP is that the materials are kept on file so it is already there. Another advantage of CoP over the list serve is that it is not being published over the listserv for people that are related to our field, but do not teach to see. Sometimes, looking at some of the requests, I imagine that if I were a business person on the listserv, I would wonder if the curriculum of some agriscience instructors is very rigorous. Although anyone can apply to be a member of CoP, most people on there have a special purpose.

Also, if you have ideas that you would like to get out in the Agriscience Teaching world, you can have it posted on CoP and it will stay there forever. I know that we have been talking about finding a place to post all of the ideas that come across the listserv so it can be viewed at a later date and the CoP can be this place.

Above and beyond these ideas, the CoP also serves as a social network in which you can post questions and a person that is the administrator of the community will find you an answer if no one else posts an answer. Also, the social network reaches much more than the state of Wisconsin, it covers the nation, so you will possibly be able to get many more ideas and activities.

I know that our listserv is a great tool to get materials and ideas quickly, but I recommend that if you have not yet tried to use CoP that you give it a shot. Even if you tried it before, it is a lot more active than it was in the past. There are twice as many registered users as there was last year at this time. It is a great method to get worksheets, curriculum ideas and activities. Plus if you misplace it, it will be there for years to come!!

Policy & Bylaws Committee - Kim Houser

In attending the NAAE convention there are so many opportunities for professional development; from workshops and keynote speakers to sponsor receptions and networking with other agricultural education instructors. Another way to get involved is by serving on a committee. Now, I know when you read the title of the article many of you probably skipped this one (thanks a lot!) or thought, "Umm, not really my cup of tea". Let me assure you I used to be one of those people! However, after serving on the committee, the policy and by law committee is important and worth the read. I will do my best to make this as quick and painless as possible! There were two items of business that the committee has passed and is recommending to the board.

The first item is related to direct membership. The committee recommends to the board to pass a bylaw amendment which states that the voting privileges of direct active members be structured identical to active members. In short, if a state does not have a statewide agricultural education organization (like WAEE), they are not punished because of it and will have the opportunity to vote on state and national items the same as other states.

The second item is related to specific dues dollar amounts. The committee recommends to the board to omit the specific dollar dues amount for each level of membership in the bylaws. In short, if you look at other professional organizations the specific dollar amounts for dues are not listed in the bylaws. This will make it easier, if necessary, to restructure dues. However, if the dues are ever restructured, it will have to come before the membership and voted on by each region.

If you are ever given the chance, I encourage you to attend the NAAE National Convention, it is a great chance for you to get more involved in your organization and by becoming involved in a national committee is a way for your voice to be heard!

NAAE Article by Rick Henningfeld

Career success is part of the FFA mission. We go to extremes to make sure that our students are prepared for further education or the workforce when they leave the doors of our high school. Yet we remain to educate a new group of students that will undoubtedly go through the same growth if they so choose. As Agricultural Educators we are teaching the methods, science, and technology of a vast and rapidly changing industry. Fortunately, just as we do for our students, we also do a great job of creating professional development opportunities for ourselves. The NAAE conference is one of the venues that I recently was able to participate in to not only grow myself but also to help grow others.

Lisa Konkel and I presented a workshop on an Exploratory Biotechnology curriculum that Lisa had created as part of her graduate work. I piloted the curriculum in my Exploring Agriscience classes with great success. Our workshop had great attendance with inquiring teachers, many that have not taught biotechnology but are interested in incorporating it. Being a person who did not know much about biotechnology coming into our profession I was a little hesitant to teach it, but with a quality curriculum and a bit of research, biotechnology can make sense. Furthermore, it can be incorporated into most agriscience classes. Lisa and I fielded all types and all levels of questions. I am excited to know that some of the teachers we worked with will introduce biotechnology into their classrooms.

I also had time to attend workshops on food safety and energy efficiency. I was able to network with SPEC grant winners, National Ideas Unlimited winners and great educators from all over the nation. One thing I have always found humbling about Agricultural Educators is we are always willing to share ideas and help each other out to progress our profession.

NAAE in Nashville! By Josh Rusk

After attending my second NAAE/ACTE Convention I have learned that it is not only a great opportunity to learn a great deal more about your profession and the people that are a part of it, but also a great opportunity to see this great country that we live in. After a cross country adventure to Las Vegas two years ago I didn't think there would be any problems going to Nashville. After all, I ended up spending the night in Memphis last time so I couldn't end up too far from Nashville. However, when dealing with airlines and the FAA (not to be confused with the FFA) one should never bet against them. Needless to say, after a cancelled flight to Detroit, MI and getting stuck in Atlanta, GA the NAAE/ACTE Convention in Nashville, TN was well worth the travel troubles!

As soon as the plane landed and we got off the jet craft you could tell that we were in the city of big dreams. People could be seen carrying their guitar cases throughout the airport all with the hope of making it big in this very beautiful and friendly city. The taxi took us straight to the lobby, of what proved after a week of venturing throughout, to what has to be one the most amazing and beautiful hotels in the world, the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center. During our stay we got to be part of the Annual Lighting of the Gaylord Christmas lights which includes over 2 million Christmas lights and an unknown and unbelievable amount of poinsettia plants and decorations. A true holiday sight to be seen by young and old alike.

From the awesome workshops provided by companies like Monsanto & Lab Aids and other Agriscience Instructors from across the country like our own Lisa Konkel and Rick Henningfeld, to inspiring and motivational speakers NAAE and ACTE combined again to outdo the last convention. Ample opportunities were provided by both organizations for attendees to network and share best practices throughout the convention during socials provided by John Deere, Toyota and a Trade Show Expo full of educational curriculum and materials for all ACTE educators. It is truly humbling and exciting to be given the opportunity to see and work with educators from all over the country setting the course for the future of both the NAAE and ACTE organizations. Each time I have attended this convention I come home with a better understanding of the

importance of BOTH organizations and my membership to BOTH. There is so much that each organization does to make sure that I am able to provide the best possible education for my students, school and community.

Being in Nashville, we also had to see the city itself while we were there. The convention could not have been in a more perfect city either. Nashville is a city that is home to the long lasting tradition of country music and the people that have helped shape and mold it into what it is today. Just like agricultural education and FFA incorporate the tradition and pride into each and every one of our students in the successes that they are. The city went out of its way to welcome us and extended its hand to help us gain new ways of relaxing and rejuvenating to go back home and continue educating the future of this country. Thank you to WAAE for their support and opportunity to represent our members at this amazing and very worthwhile convention! I have truly been impacted forever because of my attendance.

**See you June 28-July 1, 2010
at the Marriott Madison West for the
93rd Annual Professional Development Conference of the
Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators...
Agricultural Education ~ Soaring to New Heights**



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