

New Jersey Agricultural Education Advisory Council

2013 N.J. State FFA Convention

Hickman Hall, Room 218

Tuesday, May 21, 2013

Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order – Chairman Bill Walker

Bill called the meeting to order at 2:10 pm at Hickman Hall, Rutgers University, in New Brunswick, NJ.

II. Introduction of Members and Guests

Members and guests in attendance included David McNair (NJDE), Jan Traynor, Barry Jesse, Dave Specca, Bill Sciarappa, Rich Belcher, Liz Thompson, Bill Walker, Nancy Trivette, Frank Yesalavich, Amy Ricco, Zach Gihorski (Delaware Valley College), and Kevin & Carol Keith (National FFA).

III. Approval of Minutes from February 2013 Meeting

Motion by Bill Sciarappa to approve the minutes.

Seconded by David McNair. Motion passes.

IV. Chair's Report:

A new collaborative relationship has begun between the NJ Farm to School Network, NJ Division of Food & Nutrition, and the Office of Agricultural Education program. The NJ Farm to School Network promotes better school nutrition, local sourcing, and the teaching of nutritional education through the use of school gardens. The Division of Food & Nutrition is one of only three Departments of Agriculture in the entire country that administers school feeding programs and has Farm to School staff. This new partnership will help to connect kids who know how to grow food (Ag Ed students) with kids who need better access to food as well as a better understanding of the effects of food upon their health. CDC (Centers for Disease Control) funds are being pursued through the NJ Prevention Network to help fund these projects as is being done in West Virginia. Tiffany Morey, Agriculture Teacher at Essex County Vocational School, through the NJ Farm to School Network, secured a demonstration vertical green wall for her school as an example of intensive agriculture production.

V. Old Business:

A. Post-Secondary Articulation Agreements – Post-secondary educators

Zack Gihorski from Delaware Valley College described the articulation agreement process that DVC is using. They are using templates to make the process of articulation easier. Essex County Technical School has an articulation agreement with DVC for Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education (CASE) courses and Somerset County Technical has also requested articulation consideration for their CASE courses. Other schools with CASE programs are also seeking articulation agreements with DVC also.

All articulation agreements will be reviewed annually to ensure that each accurately reflects

the educational programs. It was suggested that DVC have a table at the 2014 NJ FFA Convention.

Amy Ricco (Mercer County Community College) asked if articulated credits at the community college level will be accepted should a student transfer to DVC. DVC will accept these awarded credits as they appear on a student transcript.

B. State Agricultural Education Update – Nancy Trivette

Nancy Trivette reported that there are several openings with NJ for Agriculture Teachers:

- South Hunterdon (seeking CASE certified teacher)
- Northern Burlington (Agricultural Mechanics)
- Phillipsburg (seeking CASE certified teacher)
- At least one more CASE posting is anticipated

The demand for agriculture teachers remains high (both in NJ and nationally). There are no current students in the teacher ed program at Rutgers.

CASE was highlighted at the May NJ State Board of Education meeting. Dale Cruzan, Agriculture Teacher from Allentown and the Allentown Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum presented to the State Board and stressed the rigor of the CASE courses as well as the success of the program.

Ten NJDA –OAE grants were awarded to support CASE programs. The professional development aspect of CASE is highly valued by schools. Northern Burlington is cross-training their teachers and has four teachers certified to ensure sustainability of the program offerings.

Four CASE courses are now available. The Natural Resources and Ecology (NRE) will be the fifth course available in September after the field test Institutes are held this summer. Dale Cruzan, Allentown will be a lead teacher for NRE and in Illinois. The Animal and Plant Biotechnology course was offered this year in four NJ schools. To date, 17 schools offer CASE courses; 20 teachers are certified in one or more courses for a total of 49 certifications in New Jersey. Rutgers continues to be supportive of the CASE program, including the delivery of a CASE institute this summer in conjunction with Northern Burlington HS.

Mrs. Trivette also provided an update on the NJ FFA Convention. There were over 450 students registered and 98 “field experts” on hand to assist in the administration and judging of career development events. Over \$21,000 in state scholarships, \$7,500 in national scholarships, \$600 from the national foundation for Star Awards, \$500 from national for Proficiency Awards, and \$300 from national for public speaking awards will be awarded to students. In addition, cash awards from the NJ FFA Foundation/Association/Alumni/NJ Farm Bureau totaled \$7,800. Fifty five blue jackets will be given out along with 56 state degrees and 11 students will be recommended for American FFA Degrees. Fifteen candidates are vying for seven state officer positions. For the first time ever, the entire convention is being

broadcast on the Internet at [ihigh.com\NJFFA](http://ihigh.com/NJFFA).

VI. New Business:

A. Industry Outlook

Jan Marie Traynor reported on an outreach project that the New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association is spearheading. The purpose of the project will be to bring together all the “green industry” professional associations to serve as resources for agriculture teachers.

David McNair reported on the development of NJcan.org, a comprehensive system intended to serve as a resource for students.

Bill Sciarappa began a discussion about the value of FFA having a presence at the NJ Agricultural Convention in order to meet and learn from industry professionals. This would also increase the visibility of FFA at the agriculture convention.

B. Ag Career Network – Kevin Keith, Local Program Success Specialist, National FFA and Team Ag Ed

Kevin Keith reported on the Ag Career Network which is a membership system that will provide life long career related information for FFA members. The Ag Career Network is also being used in the scholarship application process as well as online applications for American Degree candidates and Proficiency awards. There are many more applications and potential uses for this system including the community portal, which can be used by anyone. The system will also work as a way for FFA Alumni to connect.

Another benefit of the system is the ability to generate better data on program enrollments and courses of study. NJ is a leader in the implementation of this system.

Bill Sciarappa discussed his online teaching and the movement to encourage agriculture agents to provide courses online. He felt that kids are learning better online; at least in his courses the last couple of years. There are two positions open in the Monmouth County Extension Office: 4-H Secretary and 4-H Leader.

The Fall Agricultural Education Conference will focus on recruitment and retention of agriculture teachers.

The need to establish a Nominating Committee to propose a new slate of officers for the NJAEAC was discussed. The next meeting will be in February at the NJ Agricultural Convention.

Frank Yesalavich reported for the FFA Foundation. That group met in January and again in April. They are seeking to update their website to make it more accessible to donors.

C. National Agricultural Education Summit Update – Nancy Trivette

On the subject of Agricultural educator recruitment and retention, Kevin Keith commented that this year he has seen more openings than ever before. This is due to both retirements as well as the development of new programs. He is seeing a rise in new urban and suburban programs. There is a concern in many areas about losing programs due to a lack of qualified teachers. It was noted that, unfortunately, the alternative route program does not work well in preparing agriculture teachers. This is largely due to the difficulty and challenges in managing a three component program.

VII. Meeting Adjournment:

Next Meeting Date – NJ State Agricultural Convention, February 2014