

# HomeAg

## North Carolina

### Agricultural Education/FFA Program



#### Program Description

Agricultural education is a systematic program of instruction available to students desiring to learn about the science, business, technology of plant and animal production and/or about the environmental and natural resources systems. Agricultural education first became a part of the public education system in 1917 when the U.S. Congress passed the Smith-Hughes Act. Today, over 800,000 students participate in formal agricultural education instructional programs offered in grades seven-adult throughout the 50 states and three U. S. territories.

Agricultural Education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems. Getting a food product from farm to fork requires many different people with many different specialties and skill sets. Students in agricultural education explore a variety of career fields, from biology to business management. Students receive the knowledge and leadership skills they need to succeed in any career path they choose after high school.

Agricultural education prepares students for more than 300 careers in the agricultural industry including production, financing, processing, marketing, or distribution of agriculture products, as well as the vast network of supporting careers that provide the supplies and services and management and conservation of our natural resource systems. Students may enter the workforce directly from high school or pursue higher degrees through technical schools and four-year universities. Samples of career opportunities include:

- Agricultural Economist
- Ecologist
- Marine Scientist
- Rancher/Farmer
- Animal Nutritionist
- Food Process Engineer
- Nutrition/Dietician
- Soil Conservationist
- Biochemist
- Geneticist
- Plant Pathologist
- Wildlife Biologist

Agricultural Education is committed to equipping young people with the skills they need to be successful. From technological knowledge to the people and personal skills, agricultural education is committed to educating and developing future leaders.

Agricultural education includes integral components that function beyond the classroom. During the summer months as well as during the school year, teachers develop students through leadership and career experiences. Locally, teachers develop students' leadership skills through chapter FFA involvement in program planning, officer development, as well as participation in state-sponsored leadership schools. Many teachers include student participation in nationally-sponsored programs such as the Washington Leadership Conference to help them develop leadership and personal growth. Supervised agricultural experiences provide students with hands-on application of knowledge and theory learned in the classroom.

## **Program Uniqueness**

The agricultural education program includes program offerings for students in grades 7 – 12. Students may choose to enter and progress through one of several agricultural education career pathways in order to achieve their career major within the program. The determination of offerings should be based on an assessment that includes a combination of student needs/interests, industry needs, and community interests and resources.

## **Program Design**

The agricultural education program is built on the three core areas of classroom and laboratory instruction, supervised agricultural experience programs, and FFA student organization activities and opportunities. The agricultural education program is designed for delivery through a balance of these three core educational strategies:

- Classroom/Laboratory Instruction – quality instruction in and about agriculture that utilizes a “learning by doing” philosophy.
- Supervised Agricultural Experience Programs – students put knowledge and theory to use through relevant, experiential, agricultural learning projects. While completing an SAE project, students learn to apply the concepts and principles taught in their agriculture classes to real-world problems and scenarios. A student selects an SAE project based on his or her interests.
- FFA Student Organization Opportunities – FFA activities are an integral part of the agricultural education program in which all agricultural education students should participate if they are to fully benefit from their agricultural education enrollment (opportunities for the development of life skills necessary for career success are provided through FFA membership and involvement).

A quality agricultural education program has a balanced utilization of these three core educational strategies.

## **Program Outcomes**

The major program outcomes for students enrolled in an agricultural education program are as follows:

1. Opportunity to explore career options available in agriculture-related fields and to assist them in planning for a future career.
2. Technical skills training for success in an agriculture-related career.
3. Connectivity of school-based instruction with work-based learning.
4. Leadership and personal development training needed to succeed in an agriculture-related career including teamwork, problem solving, and communications.
5. Competitive advantage for students to succeed in an international economy.
6. Commitment to community development and service through projects that require interaction with parents, agribusiness leaders, civic organizations, etc.
7. Development of skills necessary for lifelong learning in agriculture leading to career advancement and success.

## Agricultural Education Curriculum

Agricultural Education state staff work with teachers and content experts to produce curriculum materials or identify adopted materials for courses in the Standard Course of Study. Courses in the Standard Course of Study are validated by business and industry.

The agricultural education curriculum components developed in North Carolina include the following:

- Twenty-one course blueprints containing relevant and rigorous content developed by teachers and reviewed by business and industry.
- The following agricultural education courses are available online.

• Agricultural Mechanics I	• Agricultural Mechanics II	• Agricultural Mechanics II – Small Engines
• Agricultural Production & Management I	• Agricultural Production & Management II	• Agriscience Applications
• Animal Science I	• Animal Science II	• Animal Science II – Small Animal
• Biotechnology & Agriscience Research I	• Biotechnology & Agriscience Research II	• Environmental & Natural Resources I
• Environmental & Natural Resources II	• Equine Science I	• Equine Science II
• Exploring Biotechnology	• Horticulture I	• Horticulture II
• Horticulture II – Landscape Construction	• Horticulture II – Turf Grass Management	• Agriculture Advanced Studies

- Instructional outlines designed to help teachers unpack the course content.
- Curriculum guides developed or adopted for use containing instructional activities and instructional support materials.
- The North Carolina Agricultural Education Curriculum is online and accessible for all teachers at no cost. Go to: <http://www.ncffa.org/curriculumACCOUNT.htm>.

## Professional Development

The agricultural education/FFA program in North Carolina offers a wide array of professional development and training opportunities for educators. Topics include teaching agricultural subject matter and effective teaching strategies. The majority of these workshops are offered during the summer months. A three-day summer conference for is held annually for all agriculture teachers to receive updates and attend professional development sessions. Regional in-service opportunities exist each fall and spring as well. By offering the agricultural education/FFA program, you will have the opportunity to participate in all of these activities. You can join the NC FFA Listserv to receive regular email updates on agricultural education/FFA. For information on joining, go to: <http://www.ncffa.org/Listserve-directions.htm>.

## FFA Opportunities

The FFA is a national organization of high school agricultural education students. The FFA offers students the opportunity to develop leadership, personal growth and career development skills through competition and scholarship programs. FFA started in 1928 with 29 members. Today the total national membership has risen to over 506,000. FFA began in North Carolina in 1929 and today has over 16,500 members. The opportunities that are available for FFA members include the following:

- Degree Programs – FFA members can advance in the organization by obtaining degrees. Students obtain higher degrees by continuing in the organization.
- Proficiency Awards – Members can participate in this unique “written award” area that is based on their Supervised Agricultural Experience Program. There are over 40 agriculture-related areas from which members can choose. Applications are then judged at state and national levels.
- Scholarships – Each year the National FFA awards students nearly 2 million dollars in scholarships for their academic success and participation in FFA activities.
- Camping Programs – Each summer for 4 weeks at the North Carolina FFA Center members have an opportunity to participate in premier leadership and personal growth workshops. The North Carolina FFA Center is located at White Lake in Bladen County.
- Leadership Conferences – Throughout the year the FFA presents workshops that promote premier leadership, personal growth and career success. One major conference designed by National FFA is the Washington Leadership Conference. This is held each summer in the nation’s capital. In North Carolina, we offer several conferences including our MEGA Conference held in late winter and our annual State Leadership Conference held at the North Carolina FFA Center in the summer.
- Agriscience Fair – Each year members have the opportunity to compete in state and national agriscience fairs to showcase their experimental and analytical projects.
- Partners in Active Learning Support (PALS) – This program is designed to help elementary school students. FFA members go into elementary classes and mentor to these younger students.
- Food For America – This program is similar to the PALS program except the FFA members teach about agriculture to younger students. This allows the younger population to become aware of agriculture and where our food comes from.

These are just a few of the many opportunities available for FFA members today. For more information on FFA opportunities, visit the following web sites listed below.

National FFA Web Site: [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org)

North Carolina FFA Web Site: [www.ncffa.org](http://www.ncffa.org)

## FFA Mission

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. The FFA motto is: Learning to Do; Doing to Learn; Earning to Live; Living to Serve.

## New Initiatives

The Agricultural Education Program has identified five focus areas in its bold vision for its future in North Carolina.

- **Preparing leaders for the state, nation and world**  
Through leadership and service initiatives, partnerships with industry, and unique classroom experiences, we will produce the leaders today that are prepared for the challenges of tomorrow.
- **Improving health and well-being of students and citizens**  
Through a partnership being developed with Dole Foods, Inc., and other initiatives, an effort will be made to better inform students about healthy lifestyle choices and disciplines in the science fields that can promote their quality of life.
- **Creating educational innovations**  
Agricultural Education is committed to producing adaptable, globally aware, creative thinkers and workers. Partnerships with NC State University and NC A&T State University and our state's Community Colleges are being developed that will lead to additional college credit for students in high school. One such partnership starting this year is the Bertie County Agriscience Academy, a "Learn and Earn" program with a focus in Agricultural Education that will graduate students with two years of college credit from NC State University and/or Shaw University.
- **Fueling economic development**  
From the creation of new ideas to an old successful concept, work-based learning, effort is being made to fuel the future economic development of the agriculture industry. Entrepreneurial, placement and research opportunities are available for today's students in new and emerging areas of the industry.
- **Driving innovation in energy and the environment**  
Agriculture has become the food, fiber and fuel industry in the United States. Agricultural education will become involved in the growth of this new segment of the industry by incorporating new ideas and technology into existing curriculum. Opportunities and funding abound for research in new fuel crops and technology to meet our future energy needs.

## Program Management

The State Agricultural Education Team based in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University leads the Agricultural Education/FFA program in North Carolina. North Carolina is the first and only state agricultural education/FFA program to offer an instructional program for the home education student population. If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity please contact:

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